

APPENDIX I

Bakersfield Field Office

RMP Revision

Evaluation of Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern



APPENDIX I – AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN REPORT TABLE OF CONTENTS

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I.1 INTRODUCTION

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) are areas of BLM-administered lands where special management attention is needed to protect their important and relevant values.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and BLM Manual 1613 require the BLM to give priority to the designation and protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) during the land use planning process. The BLM Bakersfield Field Office (FO) is currently revising the 1997 Caliente and sections of 1984 Hollister RMPs. The Bakersfield RMP will provide a single, comprehensive land use plan that will guide management of public land within the Planning Area administered by the Bakersfield FO.

The Planning Area is an eight county region of southern central California (Map I 1-1) and consists of a Decision Area of approximately 400,000 acres of public lands and 1.2 million acres of federal mineral estate administered by the BLM. It does not include lands in the California Coastal Monument or the Carrizo Plain National Monument.



I.1.1 AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

To be designated as an ACEC, the area must meet the criteria of relevance and importance (as defined in BLM Manual 1613). Areas meeting the relevance criterion possess significant historic, cultural, or scenic values; fish or wildlife resources, including threatened and endangered species; or natural hazards. To meet the importance criterion, the resource must have substantial significance and value. This generally requires qualities of more than local significance and special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource, or qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.

Furthermore, these value must require “Special management attention”; which refers to management prescriptions developed during preparation of a Resource Management Plan (RMP) or amendment expressly to protect the important and relevant values on an area from the potential effects of actions permitted by the RMP, including proposed actions deemed to be in conformance with the terms, conditions, and decisions of the RMP (BLM Manual 1613). These are management measures that would not be necessary or prescribed if the critical and important features were not present.

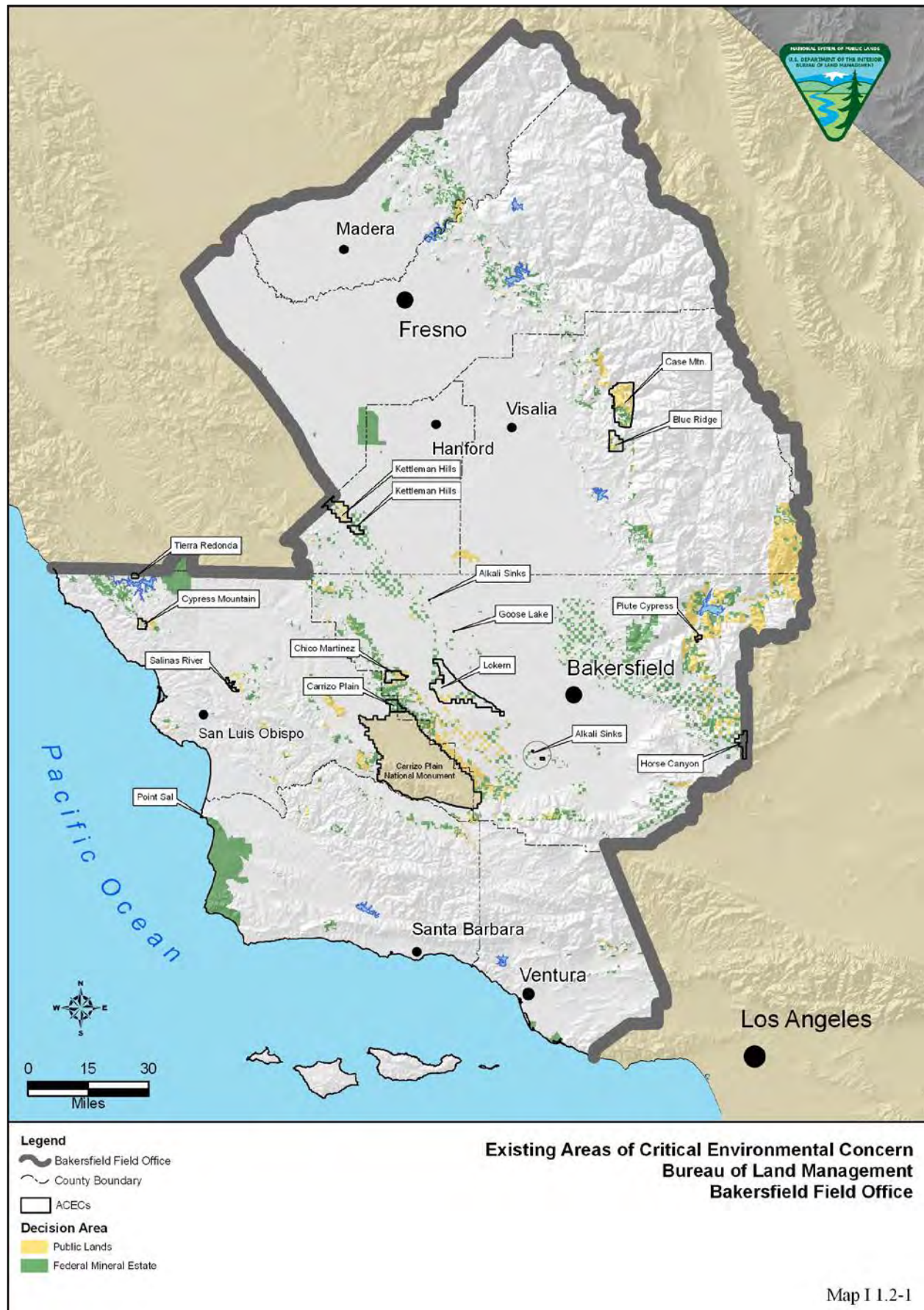
I.1.2 EVALUATION PROCESS

Several steps are required to identify and evaluate ACECs. These steps include (1) the nomination of areas by the public during scoping or by BLM resource specialists, (2) evaluation of the nominated areas to determine if they meet the importance and relevance criteria described below, and (3) consideration of the potential ACECs as management scenarios analyzed in the Draft RMP/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As part of this evaluation, the BLM also considers whether the existing ACEC designations should be modified or terminated.

Review of Existing ACECs

As part of the land use planning process the existing ACECs are reviewed to address any new information on on-the-ground conditions that may change the need for management as an ACEC (i.e., relevance or importance values no longer present, or no longer a need for special management). The review of existing ACECs combines both field work and review of existing resource inventories concerning the areas to update the ACEC information and ensure the determinations previously made are still valid and address the need for modified special management.

The Decision Area covered by the Bakersfield RMP revision currently contains 13 designated ACECs (Map I 1.2-1) of which this report reviews eight ACECs nominated with their original boundaries. All of these areas were reviewed to ensure determinations previously made by the 1997 Caliente RMP, the information resulting from this review and updated/new determinations are included in this report under the heading Existing ACEC Evaluations. In addition, new acreage figures, including repositioned lands and resulting from GIS calculations have been included to ensure ACEC evaluations are as accurate as possible.



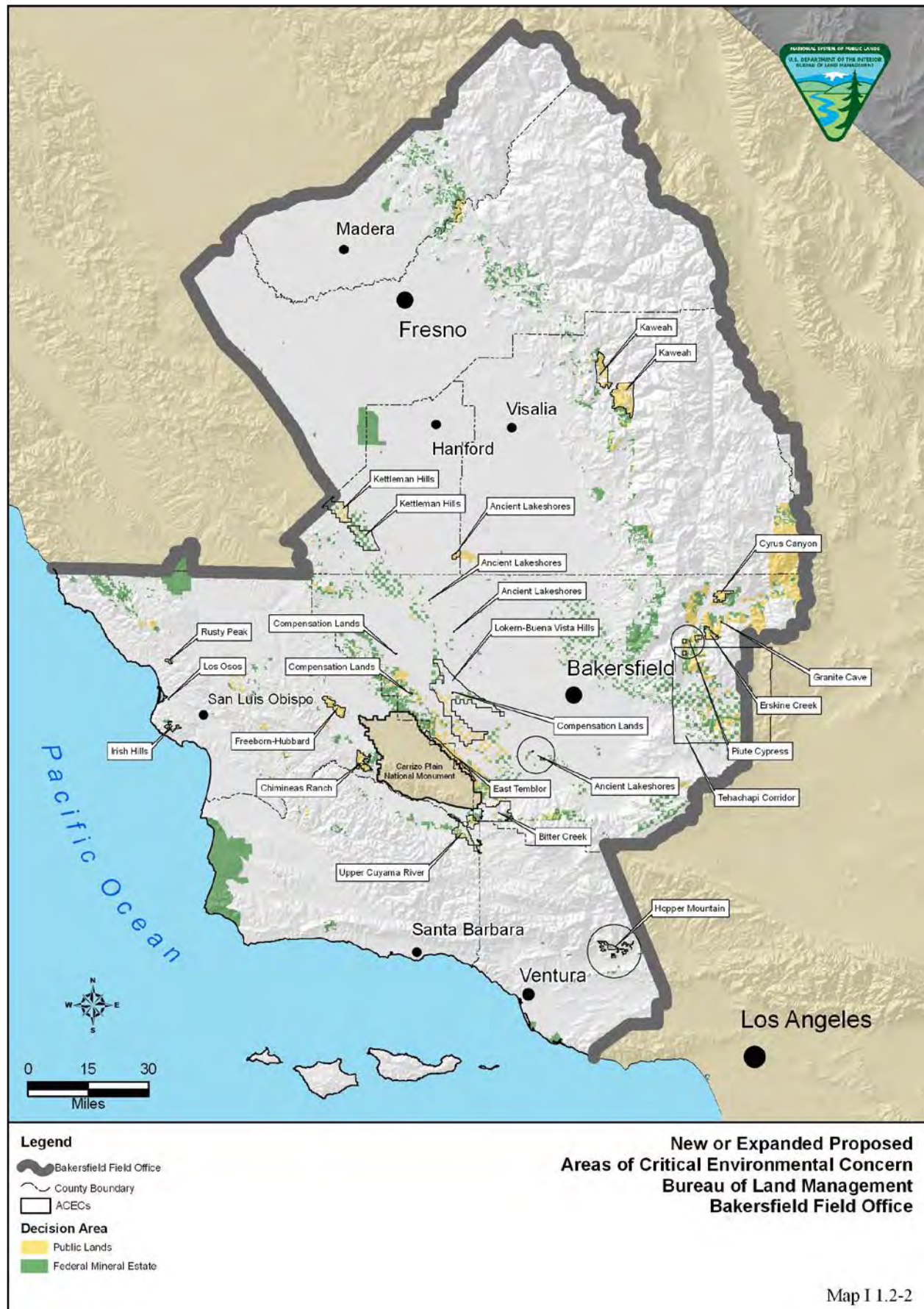
Nomination of Additional ACECs

At anytime, nomination of additional ACECs may occur as a result of internal generation, coordination with other agencies or through public comment and feedback. Designation of new ACECs, however, only occurs as part of the land use planning process.

Nomination of additional ACECs can include both new areas and/or expansions of existing ACECs to encompass importance and relevance values requiring special management occurring outside the existing boundary. These nominations receive the same review (field work, etc.) as the existing ACECs to gather information, and make determinations as to the presence of relevance and importance values.

In conjunction with the Bakersfield RMP revision four areas resulting from public input and 16 new or expanded areas (Map I 1.2-2) identified by BLM staff were considered and reviewed (as described under the heading *Proposed and Expanded ACEC Evaluations*).

Although boundaries identified within this document from both proposed and existing ACECs include non-federal and other agency lands, only the public lands and federal mineral estate managed by BLM within the planning area are the subjects of this report.



I.1.3 IDENTIFICATION OF VALUES

Nominations for ACECs must meet criteria of *relevance* and *importance* as defined in 43 CFR1610.7-2. This report considers only these criteria, and does not discuss management prescriptions. Relevance and importance are further defined in BLM Manual 1613.1 as follows.

Relevance

Areas meeting the relevance criterion possess “significant historic, cultural, or scenic value; a fish or wildlife resource or other natural system or process; or natural hazard.”

An area meets the relevance criterion if it contains *one or more* of the following:

1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).
2. A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).
3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).
4. Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the resource management planning process that it has become part of a natural process.

Importance

To meet the importance criterion, the value, resource, system, process or hazard resource must “have substantial significance and value.” This generally requires qualities of more than local significance and special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource, or qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change. A natural hazard can be important if it is a significant threat to human life or property.

1. An area meets the importance criterion if *one or more* of the following characteristics are present:
2. Has more than locally significant qualities that give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.
3. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.
4. Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).
5. Has qualities that warrant highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.
6. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

The analysis and findings for ACEC relevance and importance criteria was completed in accordance with FLPMA Section 202 (43 US Code 1712[c][3]), 43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.7-2, and BLM Manual 1613 (BLM 1988a).

I.1.4 PROPOSAL OF ACECS

Based on the evaluation of existing, expanded, and new nominations 22 areas met both the relevance and importance criteria. These areas are proposed to be analyzed in at least one alternative of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS to ascertain the need for special management attention and, therefore, recommendation for designation as ACECs. These proposals include seven unmodified existing ACECs, five existing ACECs that were expanded or combined to form five new proposed ACECs, and an additional 10 new ACEC proposals.

Six of the areas nominated as ACECs did not meet the relevance or importance criteria and therefore will not be included in an alternative of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS.

I.1.5 PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSALS

The Draft RMP/Draft EIS will contain recommendations proposing potential ACECs for designation. Public comment is requested in conjunction with the formal public comment period for the Draft RMP/Draft EIS on the findings made and proposals originating from this ACEC Report as. Public comments will be reviewed and considered, and adjustments made as necessary before the Proposed RMP/Final EIS is released.

I.1.6 DESIGNATION OF ACECS

Designation of ACECs is made through the Record of Decision (ROD) approving the RMP. The ROD will specifically list the areas designated as ACECs based on the Proposed RMP and any adjustments required due to resolution of any protests.

I.2 EXISTING ACEC EVALUATIONS

I.2.1 BLUE RIDGE ACEC

General Location: The existing Blue Ridge ACEC is located in central Tulare County, nine miles north of Springville and 12 miles south of Three Rivers, within the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. The area is adjacent to the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument and encompasses the Blue Ridge Ecological Reserve and National Wildlife Refuge.

Public Surface Acreage: 3,177 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 6,073 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 4,758 acres (1,581 acres Split Estate)

Total Existing ACEC Acreage: 9,250 acres

ACEC Description:

The Blue Ridge ACEC includes state, private, and federal land identified principally for its important California condor roosting habitat. The area is a mix of chaparral, oak woodland, and conifer woodland vegetation communities in the Sierra Nevada foothills ranging in elevation from 4,000 to 6,000 feet, in an area entirely underlain by granitic rocks.

The ACEC was designated with the adoption of the South Sierra Foothills Management Framework Plan in August 1984. The ACEC was expanded by the 1997 Caliente Resource Management Plan through the addition of 20 acres of public surface and subsurface to the existing ACEC. Within the ACEC boundary, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) manage 897 acres as the Blue Ridge National Wildlife Refuge, and the California Department of Fish and Game manages 596 acres as the Blue Ridge Ecological Reserve. All public land within the ACEC has been designated as the Blue Ridge Critical Condor Habitat Zone by the USFWS. In 1985, an interagency Blue Ridge Habitat Management Plan was completed to guide management for these lands.

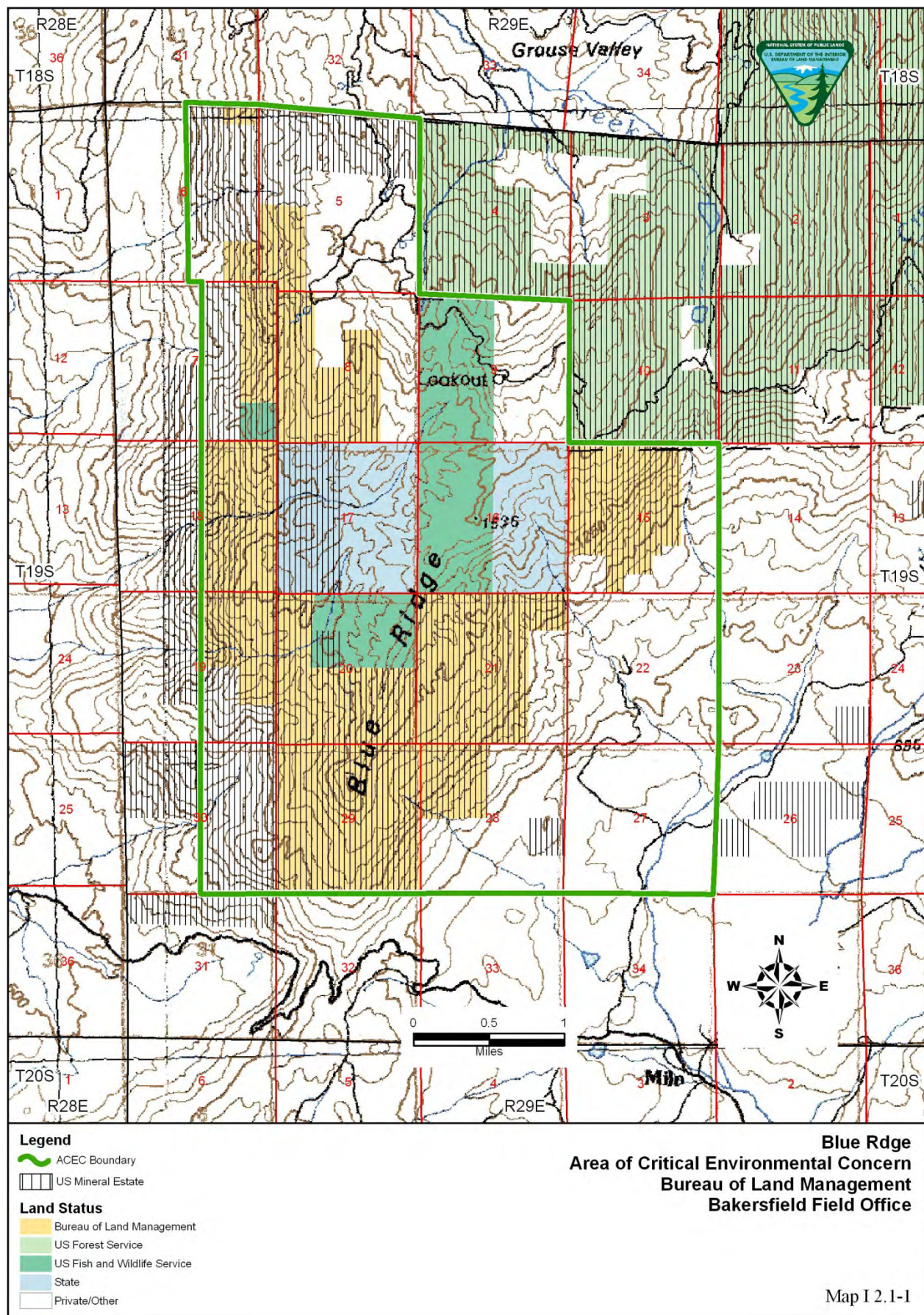
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The Blue Ridge area is an important California condor (a species federally listed as endangered) roost location close to nesting and foraging areas. The area was designated as Critical Habitat by the USFWS in 1976, and continues to be important to the recovery of this species.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant	No	Natural process and systems may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
communities; or rare geological features).		
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area includes habitat designated critical for the endangered California condor and is identified as part of the Blue Ridge Critical Condor Habitat Zone. Furthermore, the public lands are adjacent to both the National Wildlife Refuge and State Blue Ridge Ecological Reserve.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The Blue Ridge ACEC contains approximately 1,200 acres of split estate with privately owned surface limiting the ability to protect important habitat including snags and roost trees. Furthermore, the ACEC encompasses 3,000 acres of private land and mineral estate on which incompatible and detrimental uses could occur.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The California condor is a federally listed species and the Blue Ridge area has been designated as Critical Habitat both of which elevate the area as a national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.2.2 CARRIZO PLAIN NATURAL AREA ACEC

General Location: The existing Carrizo Plain Natural Area ACEC is located in western Kern and southeastern San Luis Obispo counties, 20 miles west of Buttonwillow, in the Temblor Range. The area is adjacent to the Carrizo Plain National Monument (CPNM) and is the remaining portion of the larger ACEC that was incorporated into the CPNM.

Public Surface Acreage: 122 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 6,181 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 4,758 acres (4,636 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 6,303 acres

Area Description:

The remaining portion of the Carrizo Plain Natural Area ACEC includes private land, public land and federal mineral estate that was not included in the CPNM. It is located partially in the Temblor National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area (NCLWMA) with elevations ranging from 2,400 to 4,000 feet.

Vegetation in the area primarily consists of grasslands and oak woodlands. While oak woodlands are an important wildlife and plant community, this area does not represent more than locally significant qualities.

After review this area does not exhibit the significant historic, cultural, or scenic values, nor the same wildlife values or natural process and systems that occur within the larger portion of the original ACEC now managed as the CPNM. Therefore, it is determined this area no longer meets the relevance and importance criteria for designation as an ACEC.

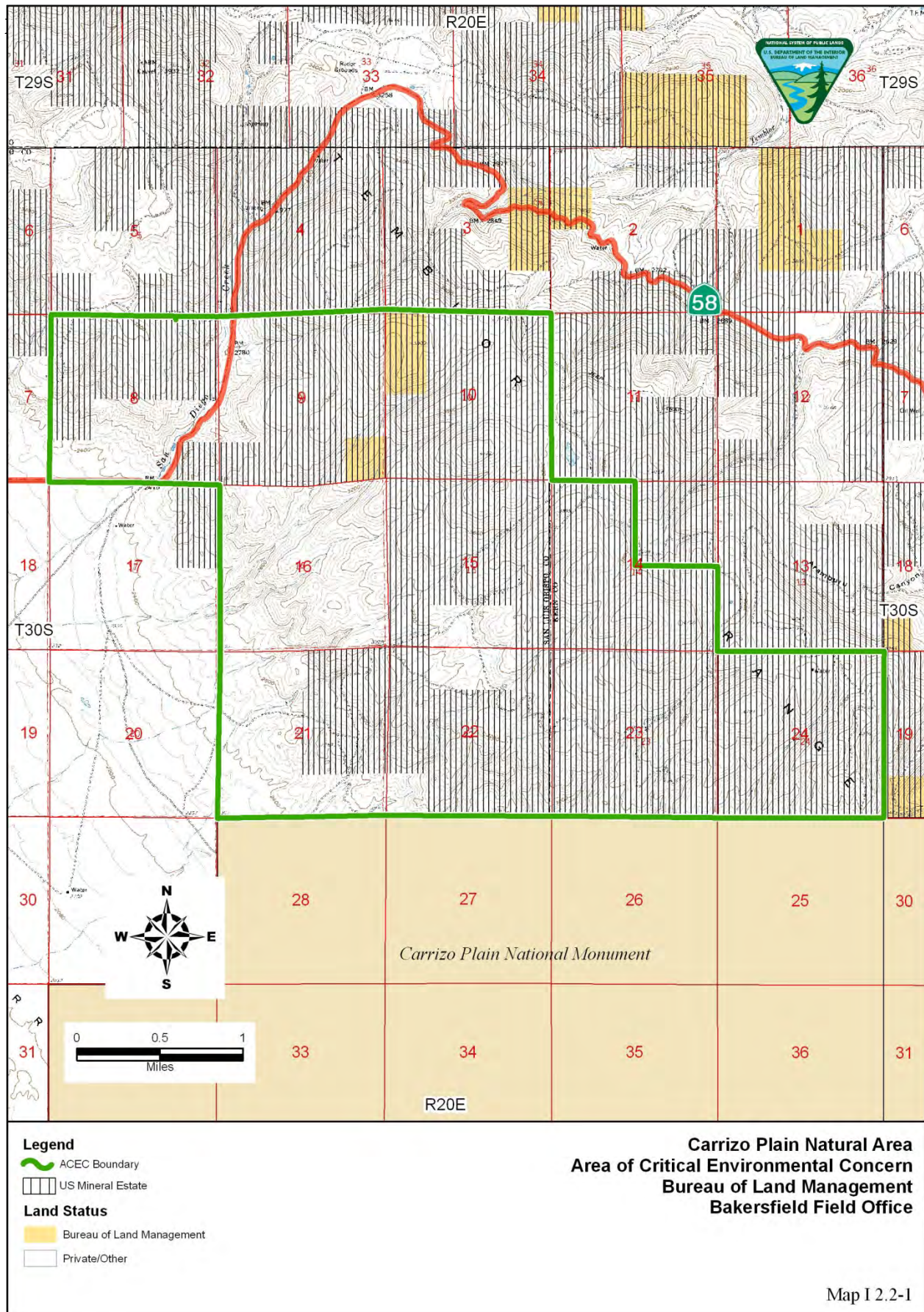
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Fish and wildlife resource may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	No	Important plant communities may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	While this portion of the Carrizo Plain Natural Area ACEC contains oak woodlands, which are an important wildlife and plant community, the area does not represent more than locally significant qualities.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	No	There is no known quality or circumstance making this area exemplary, unique, or vulnerable to adverse change.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	No national priority concerns are known in the ACEC.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.2.3 CHICO MARTINEZ ACEC

General Location: The existing Chico Martinez ACEC is located in Kern County, 22 miles west of the town of Buttonwillow and 15 miles northwest of the town of McKittrick along Chico Martinez and Carneros Creeks.

Public Surface Acreage: 3,234 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 3,984 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 4,608 acres (1,373 acres Split Estate)

Total Existing ACEC Acreage: 7,217 acres

ACEC Description:

The Chico Martinez ACEC includes private and federal land, identified principally for its important cultural, paleontological and geological resources, in addition to habitat for special status animal and plant species. The area is a mix of vegetation communities in the foothills of the Temblor Range ranging in elevation from 1,200 to 2,000 feet.

The area, riddled with several drainages and numerous springs, played an important role in the regional pre-history of southern San Joaquin Valley and was widely used by Native Americans. Furthermore, rock formations in the area, including natural caves, allowed for temporary settlements as people travelled along the early California trail from San Pedro to East Oakland. The area also exhibits historic agricultural improvements in the form of rock corrals.

The area is the type location (primary example of a specific formation to which others are compared) for the Zemorrian Stage paleontological deposits and for a number of other members of geologic formations, including the following: within the Monterey Shale, the Gould Shale member and the reference section of the McLure Shale member; within the Temblor Formation the Button bed member, the Carneros Sandstone member and the Phacoides sand member.

In addition to the numerous cultural, paleontological, and geological resources of the area, the USFWS and CDFG identified the area as important for the recovery of federally listed species in the *Kern County Valley Floor HCP* that established the area as a corridor (green zone) to connect listed species habitat in western Kern County.

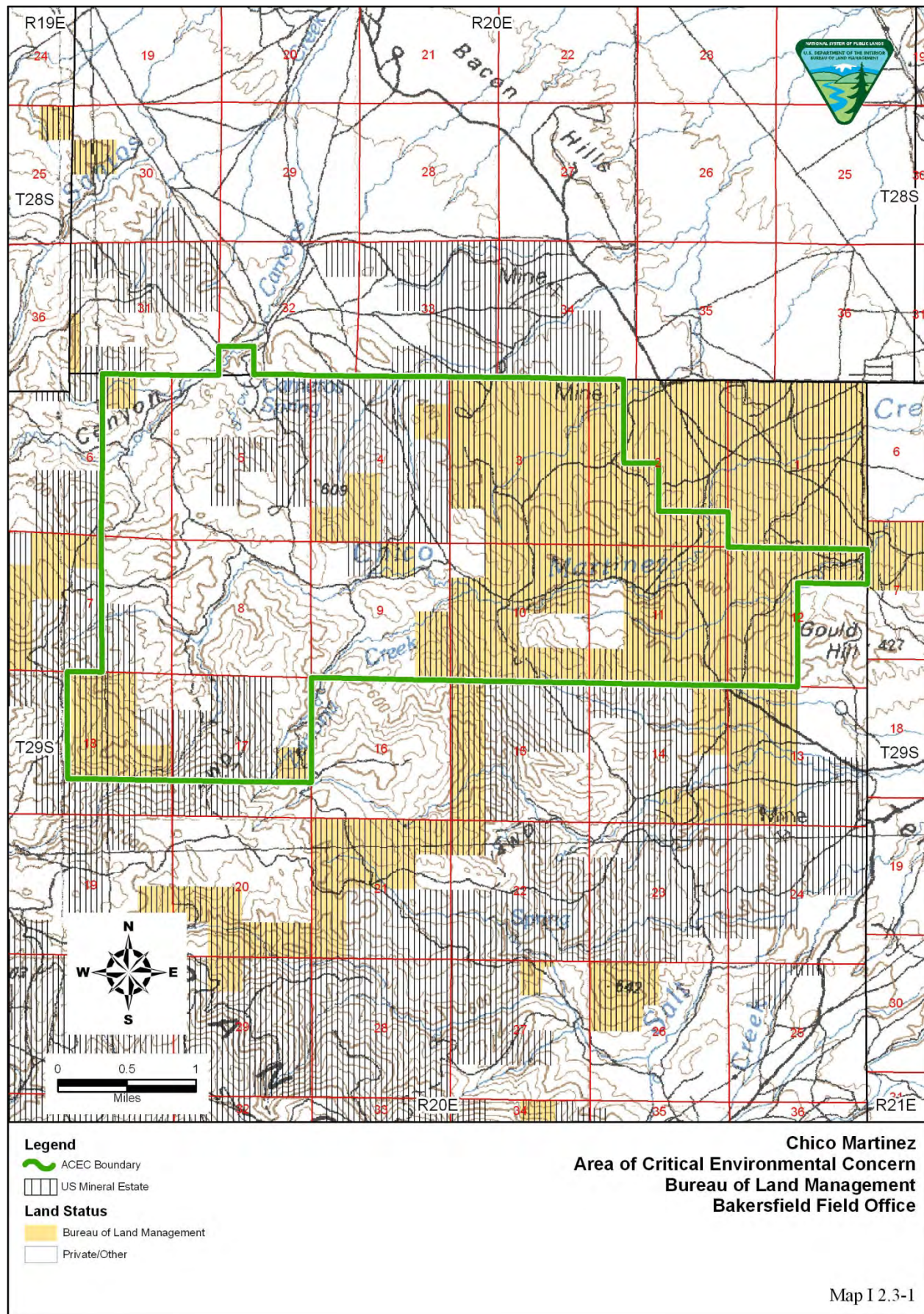
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The Chico Martinez area contains evidence of prehistoric and historic uses including temporary settlements, rock shelters, and early agricultural improvements. Some of the best examples of which are located on private property within the ACEC boundary.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The lower slopes and less rugged terrain of the area provides habitat for the federally endangered blunt nosed-leopard lizard and San Joaquin kit fox and State listed San Joaquin antelope squirrel. Furthermore, the rock formations provide nesting habitat for prairie falcon and other raptors.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area is the paleontological type location for the Zemorrian Stage and geologic type location for a number of formations. Furthermore, two BLM California sensitive plant species: <i>Eriogonum temblorense</i> (Temblor buckwheat) and <i>Layia heterotricha</i> (pale-yellow layia), have been recorded in Chico Martinez canyon.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The ACEC contains important examples of regional prehistory in relatively undisturbed condition. In addition, the ACEC represents an important part of a regional conservation strategy for federally listed species.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Cultural resources found within the ACEC are both fragile and irreplaceable examples of the prehistory of California. Furthermore, the area represents type locations for significant paleontological and geological resources.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Cultural resources within the area are likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the ACEC comprises important habitats for federally listed species.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.2.4 CYPRESS MOUNTAIN ACEC

General Location: The existing Cypress Mountain ACEC is within the Santa Lucia Range in San Luis Obispo County, 15 miles west of the city of Paso Robles.

Public Surface Acreage: 1,080 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 1,955 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 1,080 acres (0 acres Split Estate)

Total Existing ACEC Acreage: 3,035 acres

ACEC Description:

The Cypress Mountain ACEC includes private and federal land, identified principally for its rare vegetation types. Cypress Mountain is primarily underlain by rocks of the Franciscan Complex, including serpentine and shale. In an area of the ACEC, this geology gives rise to serpentine soils that support endemic vegetation communities and species. In addition, the area exhibits two rare series: Sargent cypress series and Whiteleaf manzanita series (Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf 1995, CNPS 2009). Elevations range from 1,500 to 2,923 feet.

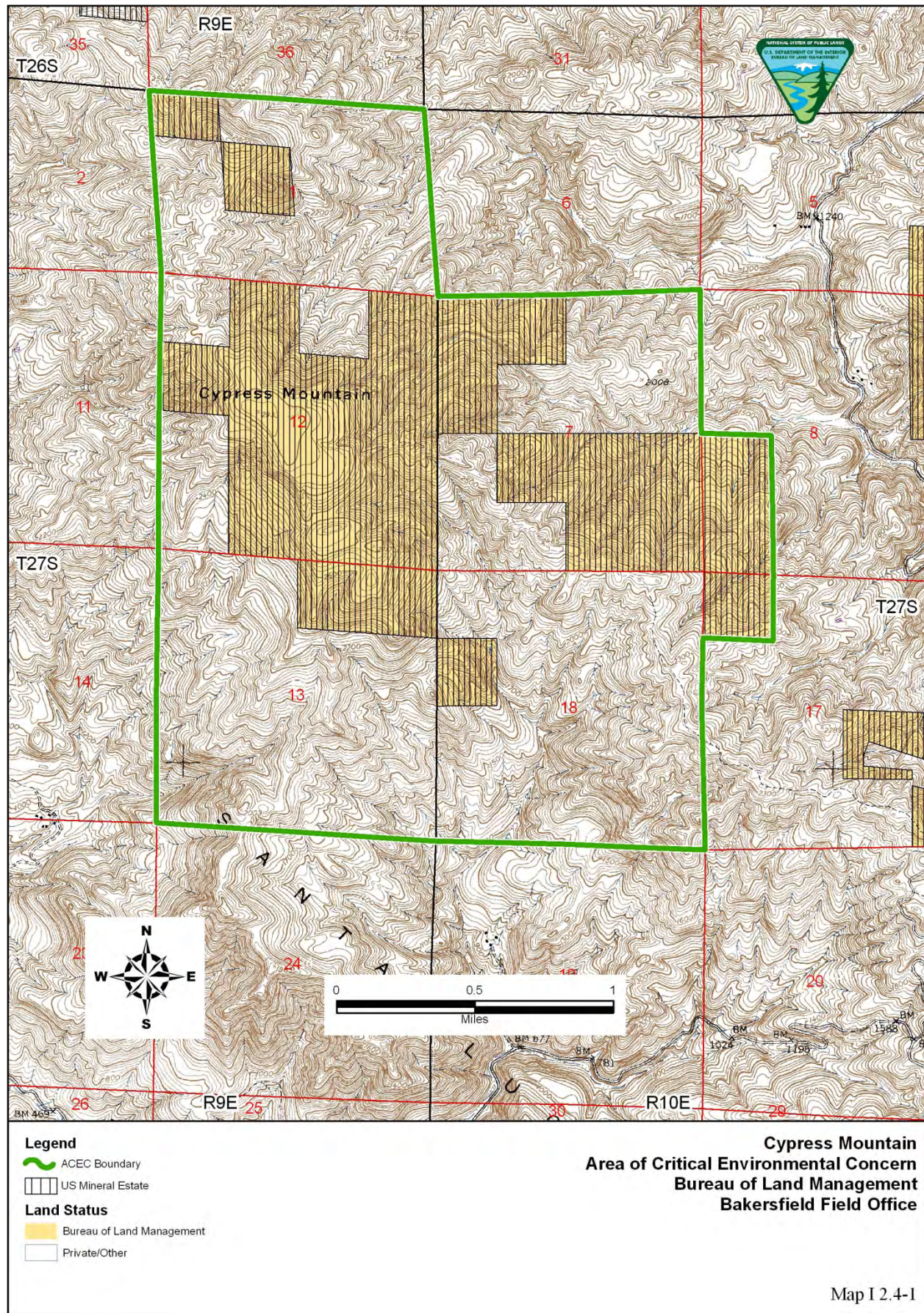
The Sargent cypress (*Callitropsis [cupressus] sargentii*) grows in extensive, well defined groves (Hoover, 1970) that represent some of the best examples on public land (Wolf and Wagner 1948). Additional rare plants that may be present include a group of serpentine endemics associated with Sargent cypress, including *Arctostaphylos pilosula*, *Calochortus simulans*, and *Carex obispoensis*.

Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Fish and wildlife resource may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The ACEC contains two rare vegetation series and may contain a number of rare and endemic plant species dependent on the serpentine soils present within the area.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The Cypress Mountain population is considered one of the two finest groves of Sargent cypress and is the best under public ownership, with trees up to 90 feet tall.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The rare vegetation series found within the ACEC is somewhat unique due to its dependency on serpentine soils and therefore limited in extent.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	No national priority concerns are known in the ACEC.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.2.5 HORSE CANYON ACEC

General Location: The existing Horse Canyon ACEC is located in Kern County at the southern tip of the Sierra Nevada Range approximately seven miles northeast of Tehachapi Pass and the city of Tehachapi.

Public Surface Acreage: 1,491 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 5,406 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 2,830 acres (1,339 acres Split Estate)

Total Existing ACEC Acreage: 6,897 acres

ACEC Description:

The Horse Canyon ACEC includes private and federal land and mineral estate, identified principally for its important cultural and paleontological resources. In addition, the area contains a number of BLM sensitive plant species. The area is a mix of pinyon pine-juniper woodland and desert scrub vegetation communities in the southern Sierra Nevada Range, ranging in elevation from 4,400 to 5,700 feet.

The Horse Canyon area appears to be a transition zone between the Mojave Desert and the San Joaquin Valley cultural regions. The ACEC lies somewhat at an interface between several Native American groups and may likely yield important information about trade, resource procurement, and prehistoric lifeways. The area was primarily occupied by the Kawaiisu, a tribe centrally focused in the Walker Basin, Kelso Canyon, Sand Canyon, and Loraine areas. The Tubatulabal occupied the Kern Valley immediately north of the Kawaiisu. The Panamint and Chemehuevi occupied desert areas to the northeast and east respectively, the Kitanemuk group lived in the El Tejon area and the Yokuts were centrally located to the west in the San Joaquin Valley. As such food processing features, rock art, agate quarries, lithic flake and tool scatters, rock ring habitation features, and sites of aboriginal and historic trails are represented in the ACEC.

Of the paleontological resource values known within and adjacent to the area the unique presence of the Phillips Ranch vertebrate locality provides high research potential to yield significant information on vertebrate fossils and the history of geologic/fault activity in the region. This locality of the Kinnick Formation has resulted in discoveries of fossilized mammalian faunas (small horses, camels, and antelope-like forms) ranging in age from early middle Miocene to late Miocene. In addition, from about the same stratigraphic level of Phillips Ranch fauna locality, floras have been found that consists of sixty-nine trees and shrubs assigned to the early Miocene (Savage, 1954). Furthermore, portions of the Bopesta Formation contain Cache Peak vertebrate fossils (late Miocene) from the locality found on the east fork of Cache Creek, adjacent to the ACEC east boundary. As the Bopesta formation extends across the area, the potential for fossil bearing horizons exists within the ACEC.

In addition to cultural and paleontological resources, seven BLM sensitive plants have been documented to occur in the area: *Allium shevockii*, *Calochortus palmeri* var. *palmeri*, *Eriogonum kennedyi* var. *pinicola*, *Layia heterotricha*, *Mimulus pictus*, *Orthotrichum spjutii*, and *Streptanthus cordatus* var. *piutensis*.

A number of activities in the area threaten the values present within the ACEC. These include residential development, exploitation of wind energy resources, and the presence of valuable solid minerals, most notably the Horse Canyon agate field. These mineral deposits have in addition to agate yielded chalcedony, opal, chert, jasper, and petrified wood. Furthermore, the area was actively mined from the early 1950s until the early 1960s for a variety of volcanic and sedimentary rocks for roofing granules. Casual collection of mineral specimens has unfortunately resulted in degradation of cultural resources and values and the unauthorized collection of vertebrate fossils.

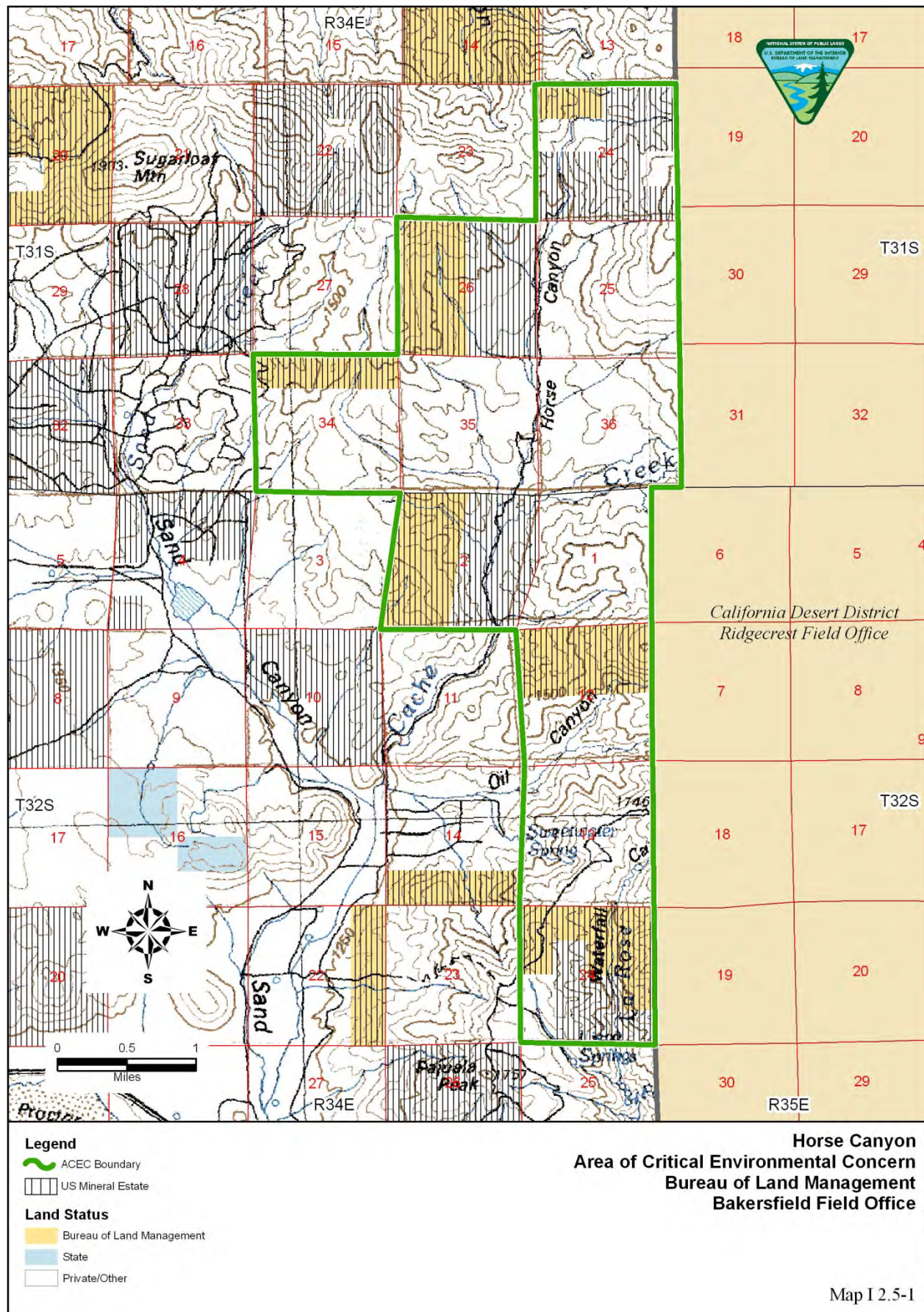
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The ACEC contains numerous sites of importance to contemporary Native Americans and harbors significant details of the prehistoric trade, resource procurement, and settlement of the transitional region between the Mojave Desert and southern Sierra Nevada Mountains.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Fish and wildlife resource may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area contains significant paleontological resources including mammalian vertebrate fauna. In addition, the area also contains seven plants identified as BLM California sensitive species.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area contains important examples of regional prehistory in relatively undisturbed condition. Furthermore, these resources are regionally significant as the area represents a convergence point for numerous Native American tribes from the San Joaquin Valley, Sierra Nevada Mountains, and Mojave Desert.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Cultural resources found within the ACEC are both fragile and irreplaceable examples of the prehistory of California. Furthermore, the area contains significant paleontological resources. These resources are vulnerable to adverse impacts as the area is noted for its wind energy development potential, had previously been subdivided for residential

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
		development, and has locatable and salable mineral resources that have historically been extracted and are currently collected casually.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Cultural resources within the area are likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.2.6 POINT SAL ACEC

General Location: The existing Point Sal ACEC is located in northern Santa Barbara County, about 13 miles southwest of Santa Maria, on the shoreline. The area is within the south end of the Nipomo Dunes-Point Sal National Natural Landmark and is bounded by state land to the south, county land to the east and north, and the Pacific Ocean to the west.

Public Surface Acreage: 77 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 0 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 76 acres (0 acres Split Estate)

Total Existing ACEC Acreage: 77 acres

ACEC Description:

The Point Sal ACEC consists entirely of public land and federal mineral estate identified principally for its important cultural resources, unique and diverse plant communities and wildlife habitat. The area is a sand dune rocky promontory, located on the western terminus of the east-west trending Point Sal Ridge.

On November 11, 2002 Point Sal Ataje archaeological district was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It includes 31 archaeological sites located on public lands within the Point Sal ACEC; the high frequency of which implies that the entire Point Sal area served as an important use area for the procurement of various marine and terrestrial resources. The sites range in size and use from what appears to be large residential bases, to various sized seasonal camps occupied for relatively limited periods and purposes, to small day use areas. They are representative of successive Native American uses of the area ranging from 4800 to 250 years before present. These sites are unique and are among the premiere cultural resources along the southern coast region of California.

The Point Sal region possesses a number of unique biological attributes. It is a transition zone where plant species most common to the north are sympatric with species more common to the south, forming unique plant species assemblages and contains a number of rare plants. One Federal and State endangered species, *Deinandra increscens* subsp. *villosa*, is present, but not currently known to occur on public land within the ACEC. CNPS list 1B species present include *Arctostaphylos pechoensis*, *Arctostaphylos purissima*, *Arctostaphylos rudis*, *Arctostaphylos tomentosa* subsp. *eastwoodiana*, *Lasthenia glabrata* subsp. *coulteri*, *Monardella crispa*, *Scrophularia atrata*, and *Dudleya blochmaniae* subsp. *blochmaniae*, which has been collected on the ACEC. In addition, 10 CNPS list 4 plants are also known from the area, with *Cirsium rhotophilum*, *Erigeron blochmaniae*, and *Monardella frutescens* recorded on the ACEC.

These unique and diverse plant communities, in association with topographic features, provide a variety of undisturbed wildlife habitat comprised of marine, intertidal, subtidal, and terrestrial areas. Researchers (Glassow 1981) have pointed out that at Point Sal, the underlying bedrock shelves extend into the intertidal zone, which provides an ideal habitat for shellfish and other intertidal life forms preferring rocky beaches.

Several State and Federal sensitive and rare, threatened, and endangered wildlife species use the area. Such species include the California brown pelican (Proposed Recovered/CE), American peregrine falcon (Recovered/CE), and California least tern (FE/CE). In addition, a variety of marine and terrestrial wildlife species inhabit the area.

This ACEC lies within the Santa Maria Basin which is considered to have high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas. The potential for economic quantities of locatable minerals is considered to be low.

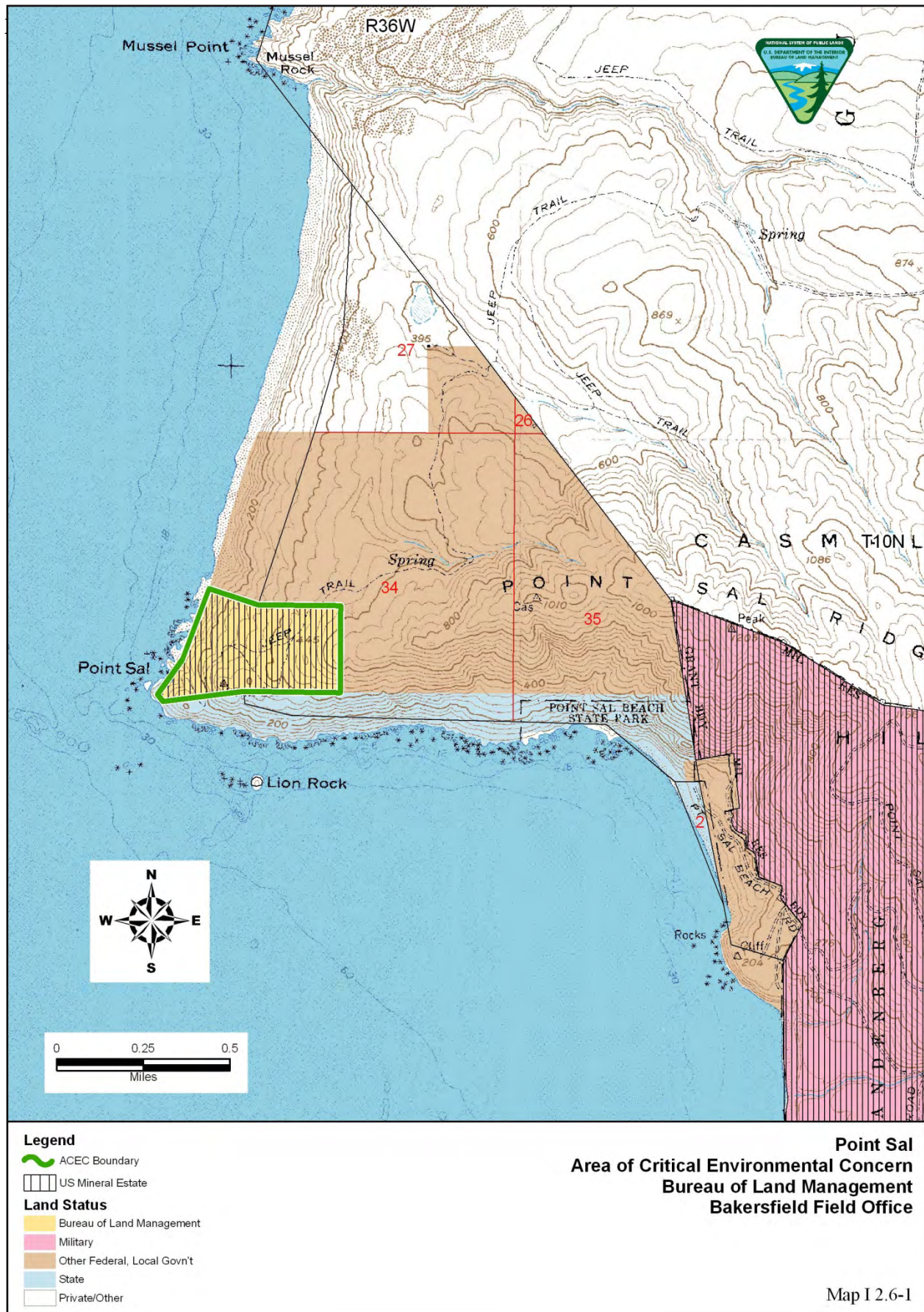
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The ACEC is part of the Point Sal Ataje archaeological district and contains numerous archaeological sites that are unique and represent successive Native American uses of the area ranging from 4800 to 250 years before present. The heritage values of the area are important to local Native Americans.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The ACEC provides a variety of undisturbed wildlife habitats comprised of marine, intertidal, subtidal, and terrestrial areas. Several state and federally listed sensitive and rare, threatened, and endangered wildlife species use the area.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area is a transition zone where plant species most common to the north are sympatric with species more common to the south, forming unique plant species assemblages. The Point Sal region contains a number of rare plants.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The sites present at Point Sal are important to regional scientific research and provide unique opportunities for study and are among the premiere cultural resources along the southern coast region of California.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Cultural resources found within the ACEC are both fragile and irreplaceable examples of the prehistory of California. They are relatively intact cultural remains considered to be very unique along the highly developed and industrialized California coast.

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	On November 11, 2002 Point Sal Ataje archaeological district was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.2.7 SALINAS RIVER ACEC

General Location: The Salinas River ACEC is located in San Luis Obispo County approximately two miles east southeast of Santa Margarita, and lies between the La Panza and Santa Lucia Mountain Ranges.

Public Surface Acreage: 946 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 1,438 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 1,604 acres (658 acres Split Estate)

Total Existing ACEC Acreage: 2,383 acres

ACEC Description:

The Salinas River ACEC includes federal and private land identified principally for its excellent examples of several rare riparian communities such as the central coast live oak riparian forest, central coast arroyo willow riparian forest, sycamore alluvial woodland, and central coast riparian scrub (Holland 1986). This segment of the Salinas River ranges in elevation from 980 to 1,750 feet.

The riparian zone along the river harbors a wide diversity of plants and animals, many of which are not found elsewhere on public lands in the Bakersfield FO. Two plants which are CNPS List 1B species occur within the ACEC, *Camissonia hardhamiae* (Hardham's evening-primrose) and *Chorizanthe rectispina* (straight-awned spineflower). Additional BLM California sensitive plants, known from the vicinity of the Salinas River ACEC and which may be present on public lands include *Calochortus obispoensis*, *Calochortus simulans*, *Carex obispoensis*, *Castilleja densiflora* ssp. *obispoensis*, *Chlorogalum pomeridianum* var. *minus*, *Chorizanthe breweri*, *Eriastrum leuteum*, *Fritilaria viridea*, *Layia heterotricha*, and *Monardella palmeri*. Additionally, this riparian system, with its nearly perennial water flow, supports habitat for and is within the range of several sensitive species of animals. Critical habitat for the South Central California Coast Steelhead Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU) occurs within the ACEC on private land. Western pond turtle, a BLM California sensitive species occurs in this ACEC. The Salinas River within the ACEC provides important migratory and nesting habitat for Neotropical Migrating Birds, an assemblage of species which has experienced a drastic population decline in recent years.

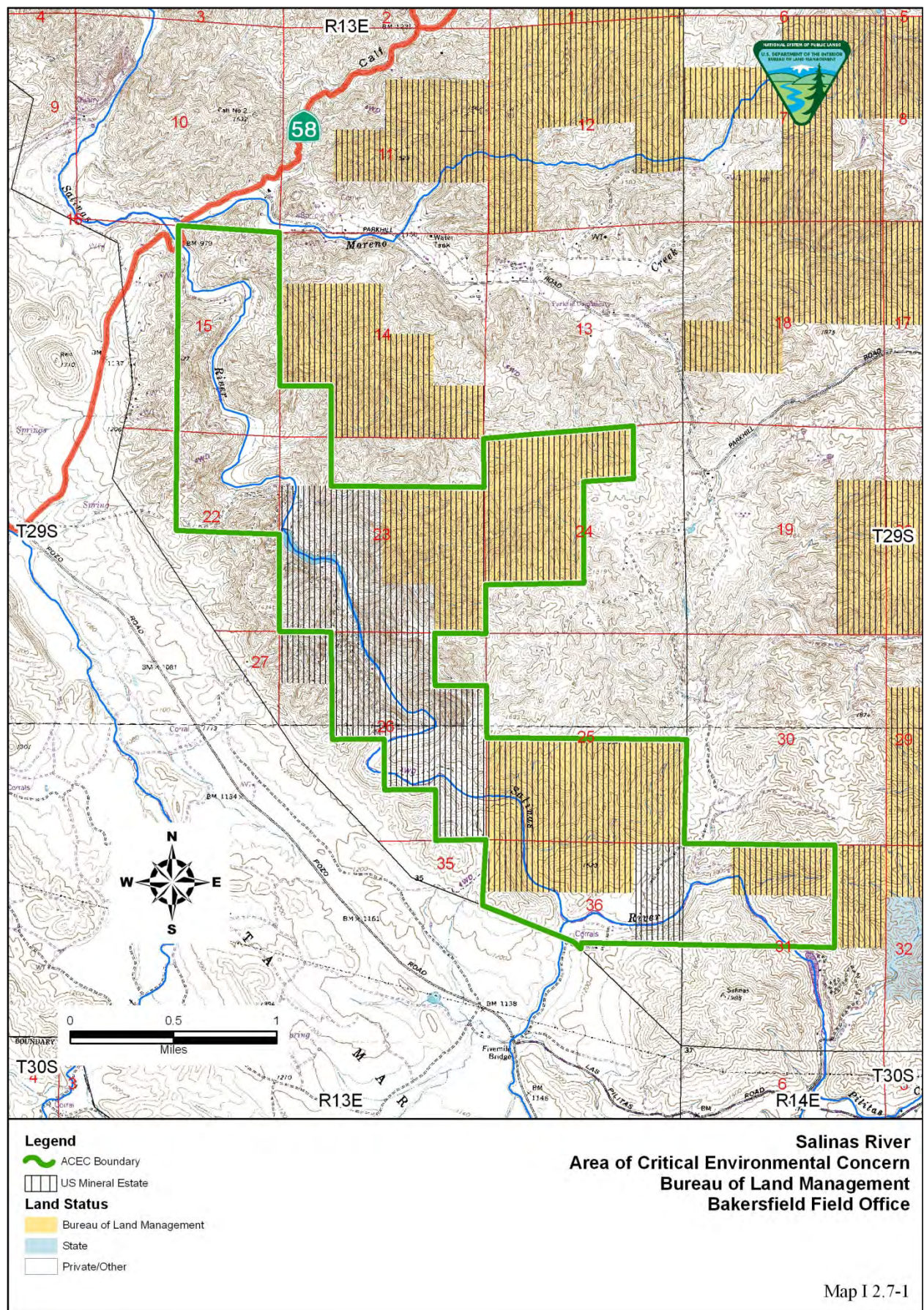
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	Within the ACEC the Salinas River has been designated as Critical Habitat for the South Central California Coast Steelhead ESU on private land. The BLM sensitive western pond turtle and important migratory and nesting habitat for Neotropical Migrating Birds also occurs in the ACEC.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area contains a number of rare riparian plant communities and numerous species identified as important by the California Native Plant Society.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The Salinas River itself, including the portion within the ACEC, is listed as impaired under the CWA 303(d) List by the State of California.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The riparian zone within the ACEC harbors a wide diversity of plants and animals, many of which are not found elsewhere on public lands in the Bakersfield FO and some of which are considered rare or sensitive species.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The Salinas River, including the portion within the ACEC, has been identified as Critical Habitat for the federally listed as threatened South Central California Coast Steelhead ESU.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.2.8 TIERRA REDONDA ACEC

General Location: Tierra Redonda Mountain, situated in northwestern San Luis Obispo County between Lake Nacimiento and Lake San Antonio, is located about 20 miles east of the Pacific Ocean and 20 miles northwest of Paso Robles.

Public Surface Acreage: 331 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 980 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 412 acres (81 acres Split Estate)

Total Existing ACEC Acreage: 1,311 acres

ACEC Description:

The Tierra Redonda ACEC includes private and federal land identified principally for its important geological, paleontological, and rare or endemic plant species. The dominant plant community is blue-oak woodland ranging in elevation from 1,200 to 2,050 feet.

The ACEC encompassing Tierra Redonda Mountain is known as the type location for the Tierra Redonda Formation, a sequence of marine sedimentary rocks. This is its thickest locality, where it forms sandstone cliffs. Furthermore, within the ACEC on the south side of Tierra Redonda Mountain the highly fossiliferous Vaqueros Formation occurs. In places this formation contains fossil mollusks, echinoids, sand-filled worm tubes, foraminifers, bone and fish scales. Mollusk shells and fragments are common. On the south side of Tierra Redonda Mountain are sandy beds several feet thick, composed almost entirely of fossil turritellas.

The area contains several rare or endemic plant species. One of the largest concentrations of *Chorizanthe* species in the world is found here. BLM California sensitive plant species include *Chorizanthe rectispina* (one-awned spineflower), *Lasthenia leptalea* (Salinas Valley goldfields), and *Lupinus ludovicianus* (San Luis Obispo County lupine). San Luis Obispo County lupine is the official flower for the county. Additional CNPS List 1B plant species found in the vicinity and to be expected on the ACEC include *Caulanthus coulteri* var. *lemmonii*, *Eriastrum luteum*, *Layia heterotricha*, *Malacothamnus abbottii*, and *Malacothamnus davidsonii*.

Tierra Redonda Mountain was designated as open space in the San Luis Obispo County General Plan to retain areas with fragile plant or animal communities in a natural or undisturbed state. Although not contributing to the relevant criteria, the area does provide nesting habitat for numerous bird species in its sandstone cliffs.

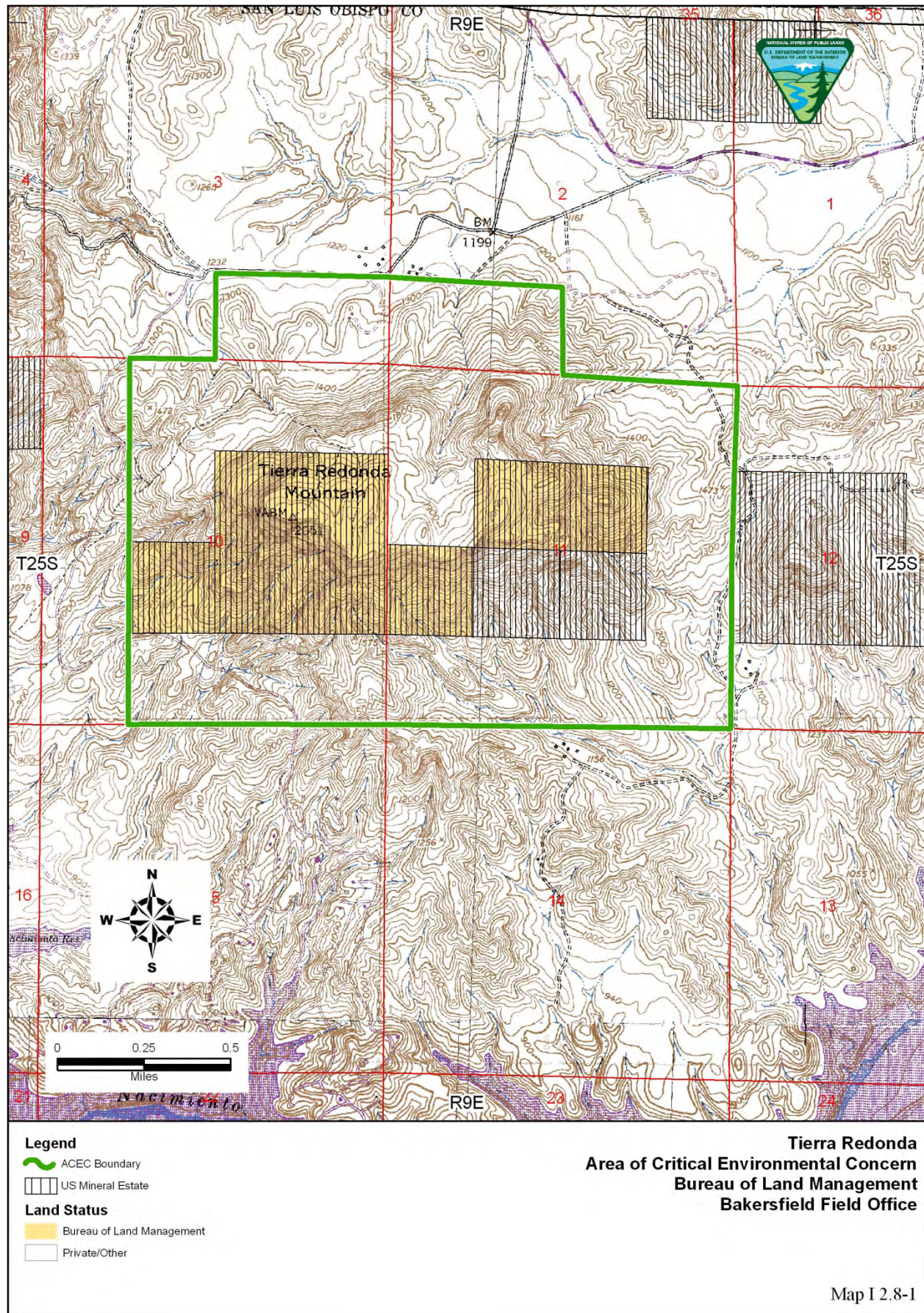
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Fish and wildlife resource may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The ACEC includes two important geological formations, of which one represents the type locality and the other contains extensive fossil beds. In addition, the southern portion of the ACEC contains sandy beds several feet thick that have created a unique dune landscape. Furthermore, the area is noted for its rare or endemic plant species.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Tierra Redonda Mountain was designated as open space in the San Luis Obispo County General Plan to retain areas with fragile plant or animal communities in a natural or undisturbed state. Furthermore, the ACEC contains one of the largest concentrations of the BLM California sensitive <i>Chorizanthe</i> species in the world.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The area is identified as the geologic type location for the Tierra Redonda Formation. Furthermore, the geologic formations provide scientists the opportunity for continued study of the geology, stratigraphy and paleontology of the area. In addition, several rare or endemic plant species occur in the ACEC.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	No national priority concerns are known in the ACEC.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3 PROPOSED AND EXPANDED ACEC EVALUATIONS

I.3.1 ANCIENT LAKESHORES

General Location: The proposed Ancient Lakeshores ACEC consists of five dispersed parcels of public surface and subsurface lands in the San Joaquin Valley occurring in Kern and Kings Counties. Two of these parcels are located 14 miles east of the city of Taft while the remaining three are approximately 30, 40, and 55 miles respectively north of Taft.

Public Surface Acreage: 1,985 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 56 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 467 acres (0 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 2,041 acres

Area Description:

This proposed ACEC, nominated principally for its cultural and biological resources, combines the existing Alkali Sink and Goose Lake ACECs and adds a new parcel located on the Sand Ridge portion of Atwell Island. These areas are located along the lakeshores of Tulare, Buena Vista, Goose and other lakes that once dominated this portion of the San Joaquin Valley and contain a mix of vegetation types including the rare alkali sink communities and iodine bush series vegetation (Sawyer and Wolf 1995, also known as valley sink scrub in Holland 1986) and associated wildlife.

The proposed ACEC includes two areas containing significant archaeological sites: Atwell Island and Goose Lake. The Atwell Island area is associated with some of the earliest Native American cultures of California that utilized the area surrounding the former Tulare Lake (one of a handful of pluvial lakes in California, meaning a lake formed during the late Pleistocene or early Holocene time period). Specifically, the Sand Ridge, a former island on Tulare Lake, is known to have been a Wowol Yokuts village site, and has yielded artifacts spanning the entire cultural horizon in California. Goose Lake contains a significant archaeological site of high integrity making it rare in the San Joaquin Valley as the continued conversion of most land along the shorelines of dry lakes to agriculture has degraded or destroyed other such sites. Research conducted at the site suggests that it was occupied intensively during the prehistoric Middle Period with a less intense use through to protohistoric times. The Goose Lake area was probably occupied by the Tulamni or the Tuhohi groups of Southern Valley Yokuts.

Although all the parcels contain the rare iodine bush series of vegetation the three parcels currently identified as the Alkali Sink ACEC exhibit prime examples of the variation in species composition naturally found in this community. Furthermore, BLM sensitive plants in these areas include three species of annual saltbush (*A. tulariensis*, *A. valicola*), *Cordylanthus mollis* ssp. *hispidus*, *Delphinium recurvatum*, and *Layia leucopappa*. Non-native invasive weed species have encroached on the proposed ACEC parcels, threatening to out-compete these rare and sensitive native species.

In addition to the cultural and vegetative resources of the area, the USFWS and CDFG identified the area as important for the recovery of federally listed species in the *Kern County Valley Floor HCP*

that established the area as a reserve (red zone) to protect listed species habitat in western Kern County.

The Alkali Sink and Goose Lake parcels of the proposed ACEC are considered to have high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas; however, some portions may not be developable.

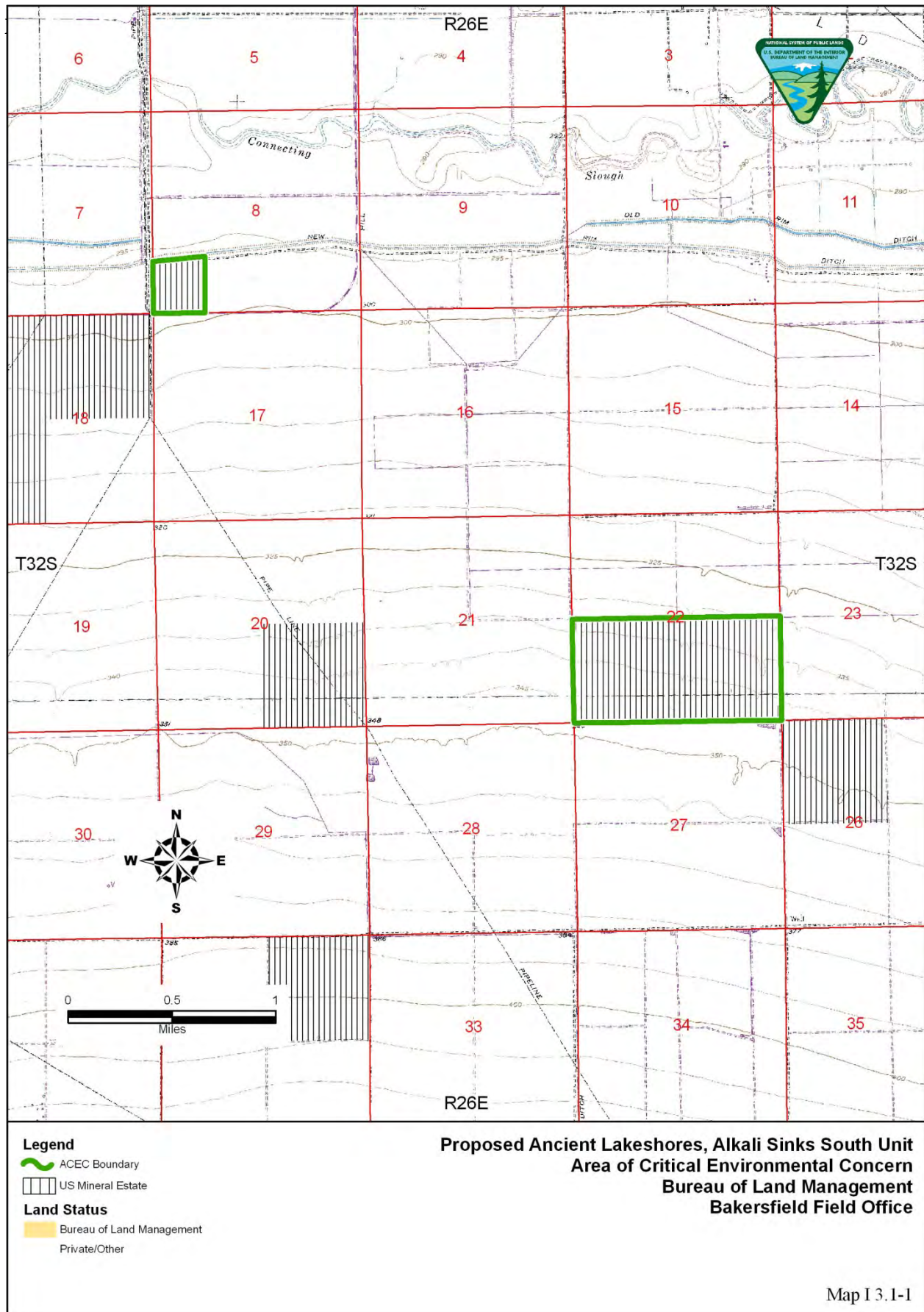
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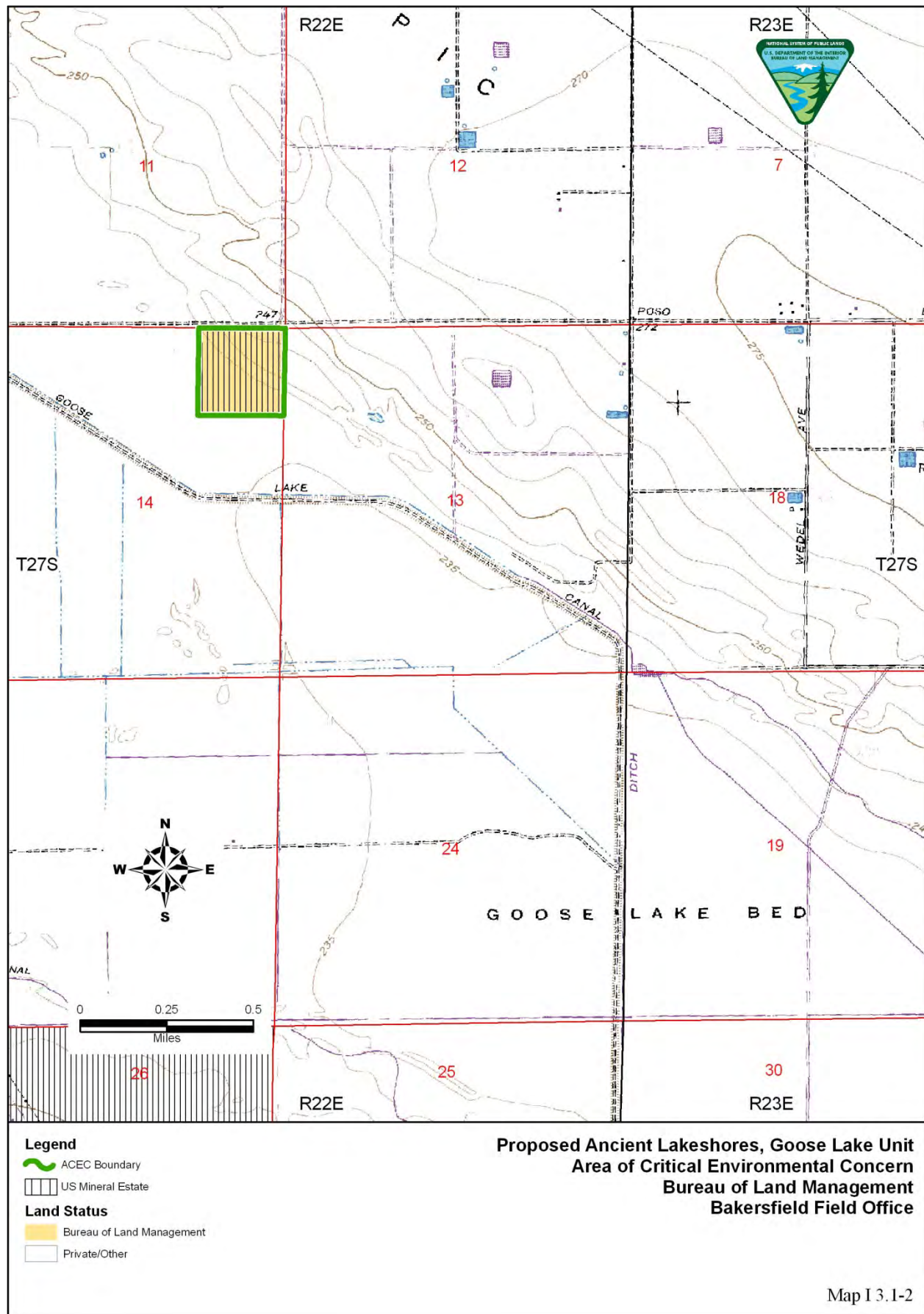
Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The areas, due to their location along prehistoric lakes shorelines, host a wealth of archaeological sites relating to the Native American use and settlement of the region. Many of the sites on public lands in these areas are in a relatively undisturbed state with high research potential.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	These areas are known to contain habitat for the San Joaquin suite of federally listed species.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	These areas include habitat for rare iodine bush series vegetation and other BLM sensitive plant species.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

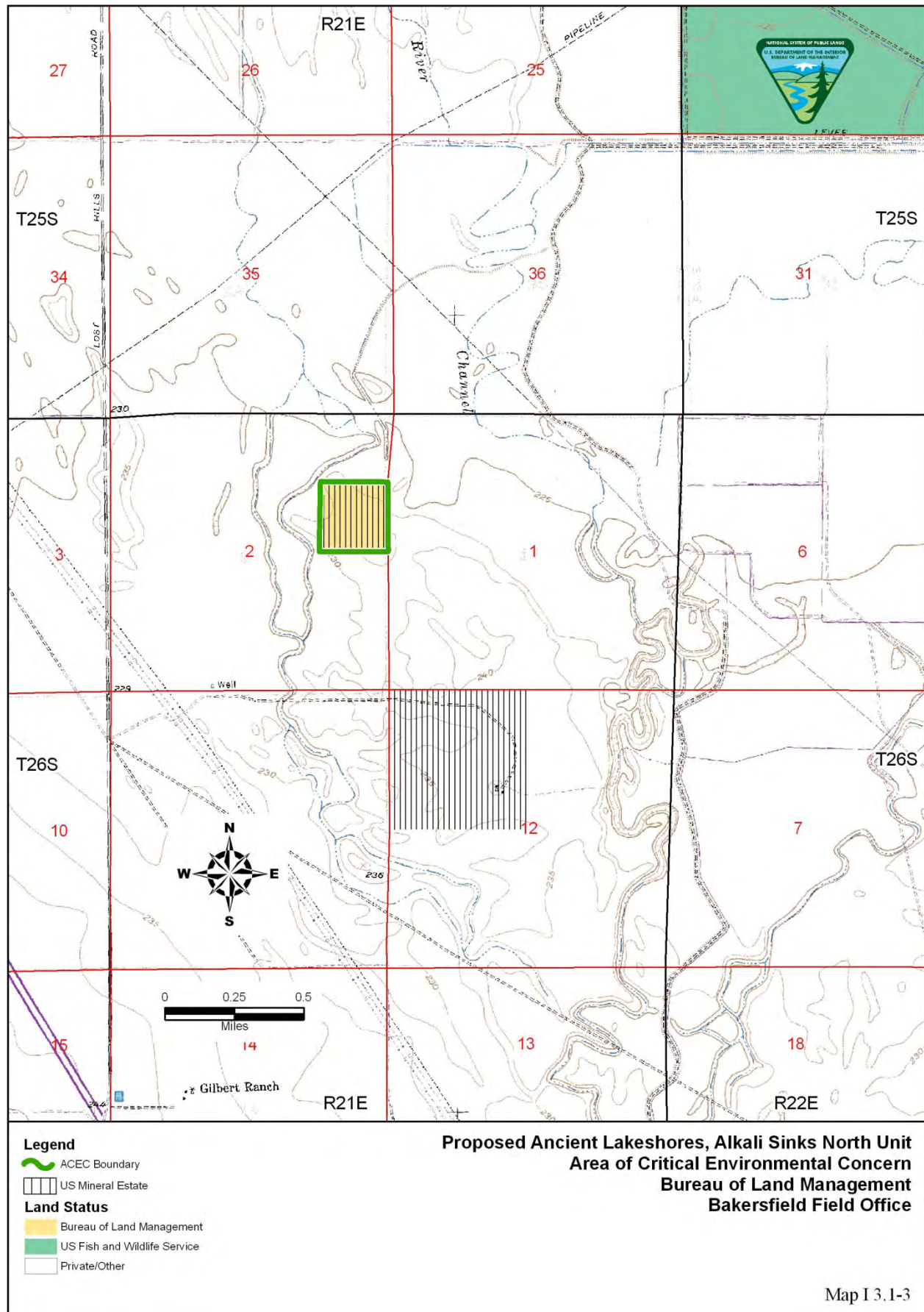
Importance Criteria Determination:

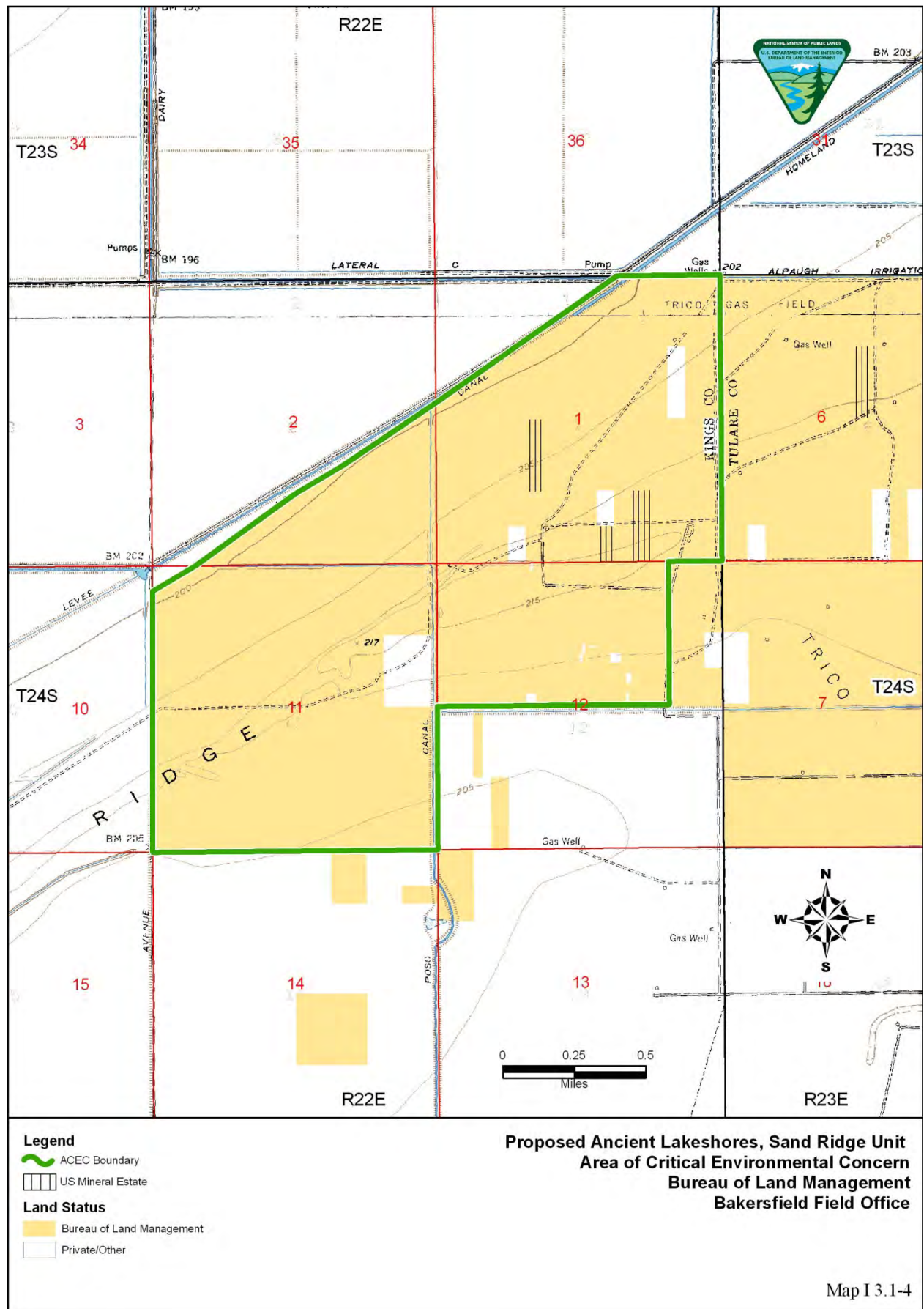
Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The archaeological sites within the proposed ACEC represent some of the oldest examples of only a few remaining sites with high integrity within the cultural region. Furthermore, the alkali sink plant communities occurring here are some of the rarest communities in the world. Finally, these parcels contain the only known populations of Tipton kangaroo rat on public lands.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	These areas are currently experiencing encroachment by invasive weeds that are out-competing the sensitive vegetation. These parcels also have high potential for oil and gas development and have been subject to illegal dumping.

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Cultural resources within the area are likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, a number of the species present are federally listed, therefore making these resources a national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.









I.3.2 ATWELL ISLAND

General Location: The proposed Atwell Island ACEC is located in western Tulare and eastern Kings Counties, approximately 30 miles northwest of Bakersfield. The proposed ACEC is adjacent to the southern shore of the ancient Tulare Lake in the San Joaquin Valley.

Public Surface Acreage: 6,301 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 15,745 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 844 acres (0 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 22,046 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Atwell Island ACEC includes private and federal lands and mineral estate nominated through the public scoping process principally for its wildlife resources, rare plant communities, and wetland/riparian habitat. The area is characterized by valley sink scrub communities at an elevation of 200 feet.

The proposed ACEC consists of lands within the BLM's Atwell Island Restoration Project which converts retired farmlands into native wetland and riparian habitat, upland habitat, open space, interpretative trails and wildlife-friendly agriculture. Since 2002 the BLM has restored 3,100 acres of previously farmed lands to upland habitat that has been planted with native plant seeds collected from native lands within the southern San Joaquin Valley. The project has also constructed over 300 acres of managed wetlands to restore seasonal and permanent wetlands to the region which were drained to accommodate intensive farming. These wetlands are recognized as important for the protection of the Pacific Flyway portion of the North American Waterfowl Plan.

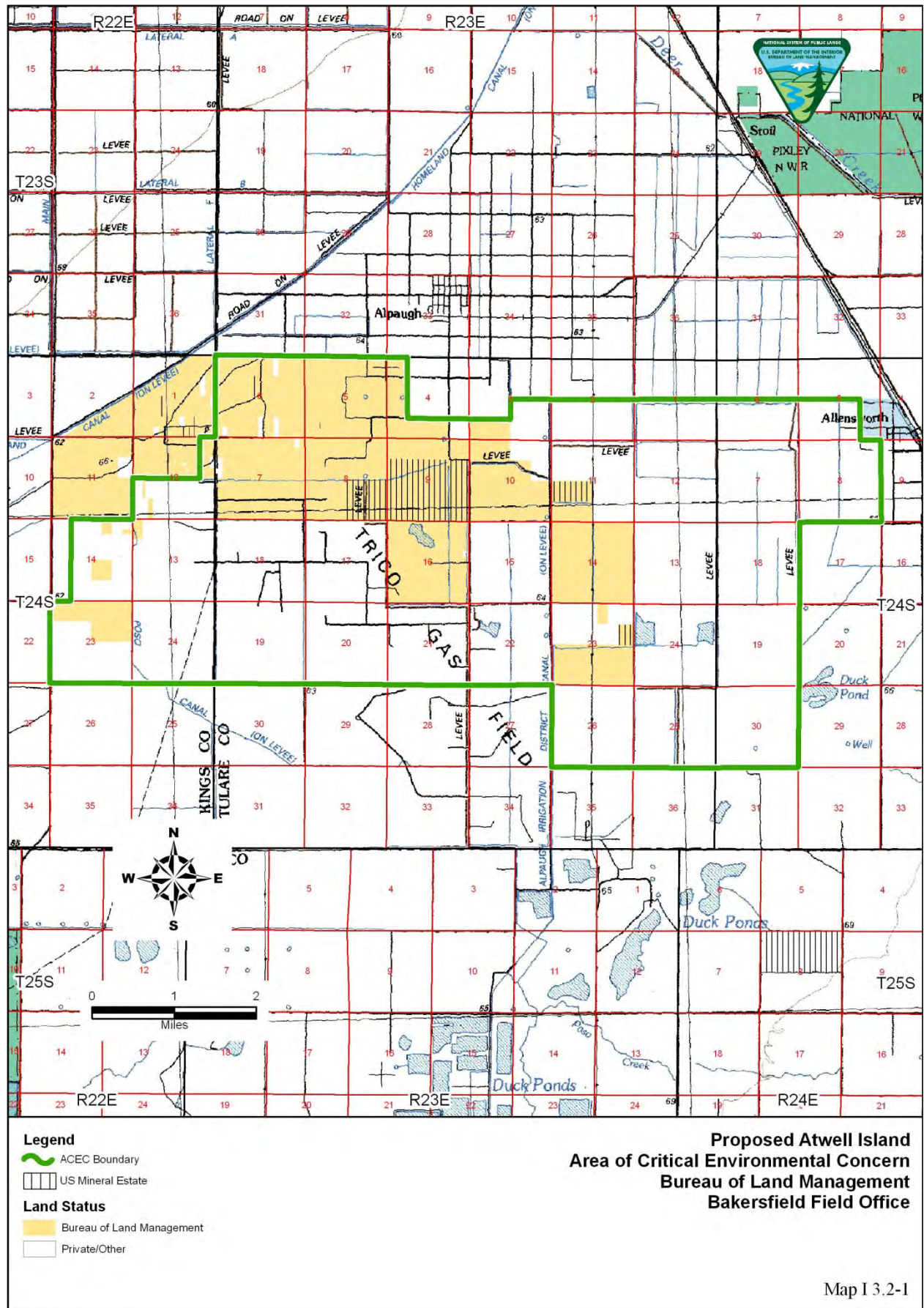
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	These areas are known to contain habitat for the San Joaquin suite of federally listed species. Furthermore, the area is undergoing restoration work to provide additional upland and wetland habitat for federally listed species.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	This area includes small remnants of native vegetation and natural habitat. Furthermore, the restored lands have some, but not all, elements of relic natural communities. Managed wetlands have been constructed to restore permanent and seasonal wetlands.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	The area does not have more than locally significant qualities when compared to similar upland and wetland resources in the Central Valley.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	No	The upland and wetland areas are not particularly vulnerable to adverse change as public access, unauthorized uses, and water supplies to protect the wetland can be controlled.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	Although a number of the federally listed, upland San Joaquin Valley species are present, their occurrence is uncommon and do not occur in sufficient numbers that would warrant protection for this national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.3 BITTER CREEK

General Location: The proposed Bitter Creek ACEC is located in southwestern Kern County, 13 miles east of Cuyama and 9 miles south of Maricopa. The area is adjacent to the Carrizo Plain National Monument to the northwest, the Los Padres National Forest to the south, the Wind Wolves Preserve to the east, and encompasses the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge outside the National Forest boundary.

Public Surface Acreage: 1,026 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 19,888 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 6,121 acres (5,095 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 20,914 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Bitter Creek ACEC includes private and federal lands, including both BLM and USFWS. The area has been principally nominated for its important foraging and roosting habitat for the federally listed endangered California condor. One BLM surface parcel of the ACEC has become a commonly used roosting site for California condors at the refuge and for some birds that have been released from the adjacent capture pen. This complex has become the primary release site for the captive breeding program or for condors that have been captured for telemetry and health studies. Furthermore, the unique combination of north-facing slopes, prevailing updraft winds and roost trees that heavily used by condors in the spring and summer seasons adds to the importance of the area.

The area is also within two Essential Condor Habitat Areas, the Carrizo and Elkhorn Plains, and the Southwest Kern County. Portions of the area also provide habitat for other federally listed species including the San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and giant kangaroo rat. The area has been identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a potential reserve area to assist in the recovery of the San Joaquin kit fox.

Vegetation communities within the area include grassland, oak woodland, chaparral, pinion pine/juniper/oak woodland, and riparian habitat. Located in the southwestern San Joaquin Valley foothills, with elevations ranging from 1,600 to 4,680 feet; the nomination encompasses the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge managed by the USFWS.

In addition to the federally listed species, the Bitter Creek area provides habitat for species of Federal concern such as western spade foot toad, western horned lizard, and tri-colored blackbird.

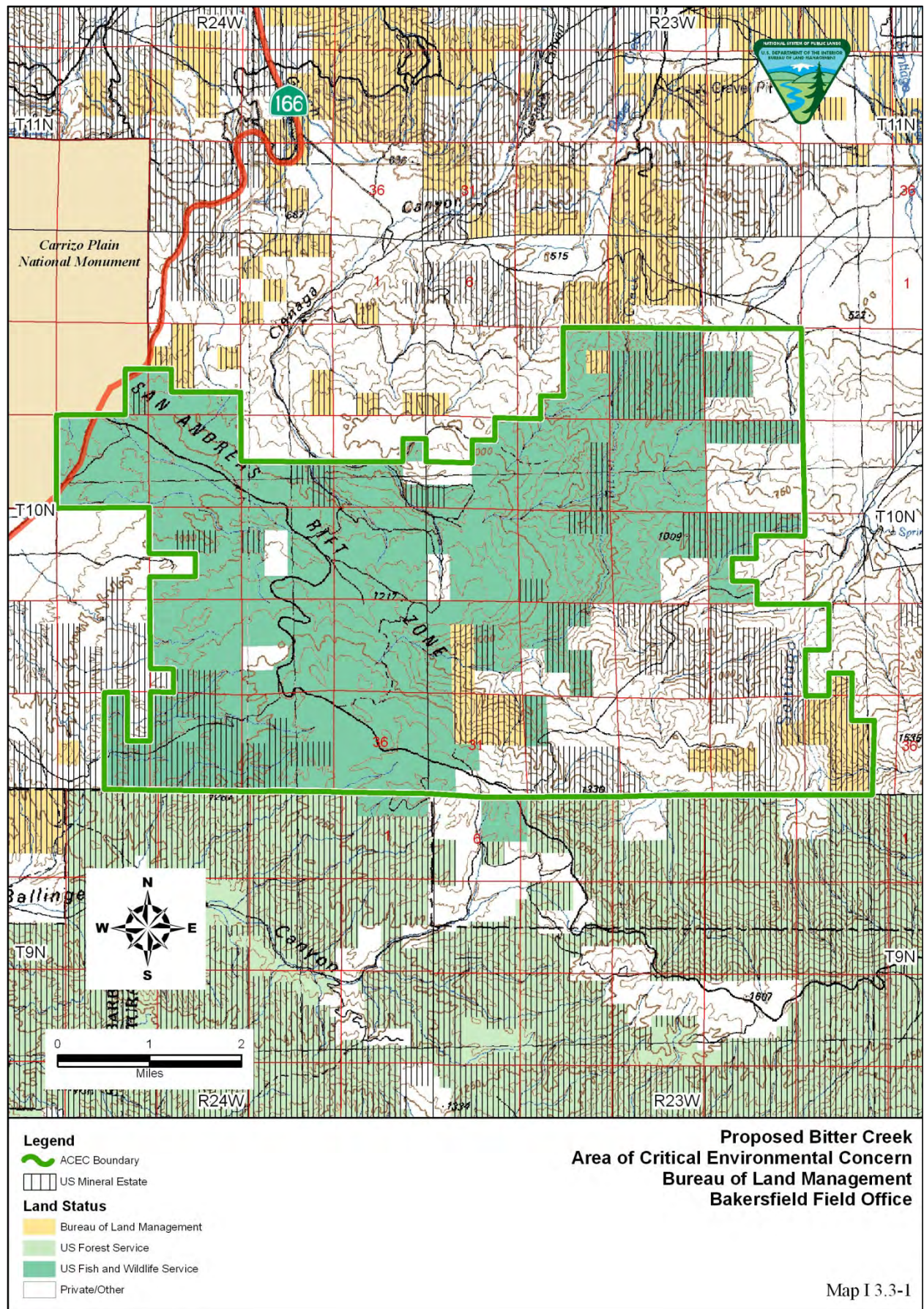
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The proposed ACEC contains designated Essential Habitat for the California condor and has an important roost site used in conjunction with capture activities critical for species recovery. It also provides habitat for the federally recognized San Joaquin suite of listed species.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	No	Natural process and systems may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area includes habitat designated essential for the endangered California condor. Furthermore, the proposed ACEC encompasses the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, the area has been identified by the USFWS as a “reserve area” to assist in the recovery of the San Joaquin kit fox.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	This proposed ACEC lies within the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge which was acquired specifically for the conservation and recovery of the California condor. The area is within the Cuyama Basin which is considered to have high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas and thus needs special consideration.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The California condor is a federally listed species and the Bitter Creek area has been designated as essential habitat both of which elevate the area as a national priority. The use of the BLM lands by California condors, in conjunction with the release site on the Refuge, elevates the importance of the area in achieving success of the capture and release program. Furthermore, the area provides habitat for other federally listed species.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.4 CHIMINEAS RANCH

General Location: The proposed Chimineas Ranch ACEC is located in southern San Luis Obispo County, 35 miles northeast of Santa Maria and 35 miles west of Maricopa, north of State Highway 166. The area is adjacent to the Carrizo Plain National Monument to the east and the Los Padres National Forest to the west, and is encompassed by the Chimineas unit of the Carrizo Ecological Reserve managed by California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

Public Surface Acreage: 6,594 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 0 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 6,594 acres (0 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 6,594 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Chimineas Ranch ACEC includes state, private, and federal land that was nominated through the public scoping process principally to manage as a linkage between Los Padres National Forest and CPNM. The proposed ACEC is entirely within the Caliente NCLWMA.

Vegetation communities within the area include oak woodland, coastal scrub, and riparian habitats. Located at the intersection of the Caliente Range, La Panza Range, and Sierra Madre Mountains, with elevations ranging from 1,600 to 2,900 feet; the nomination is encompassed by the Chimineas unit of the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve.

Management objectives of the NCLWMA include improving and maintaining vegetative communities that benefit wildlife species, and improving recreation opportunities for hunting, hiking, and nature study. Management actions to meet these objectives have provided adequate protection of the relevant values and special management attention from ACEC designation would not necessarily provide additional protection to the values present.

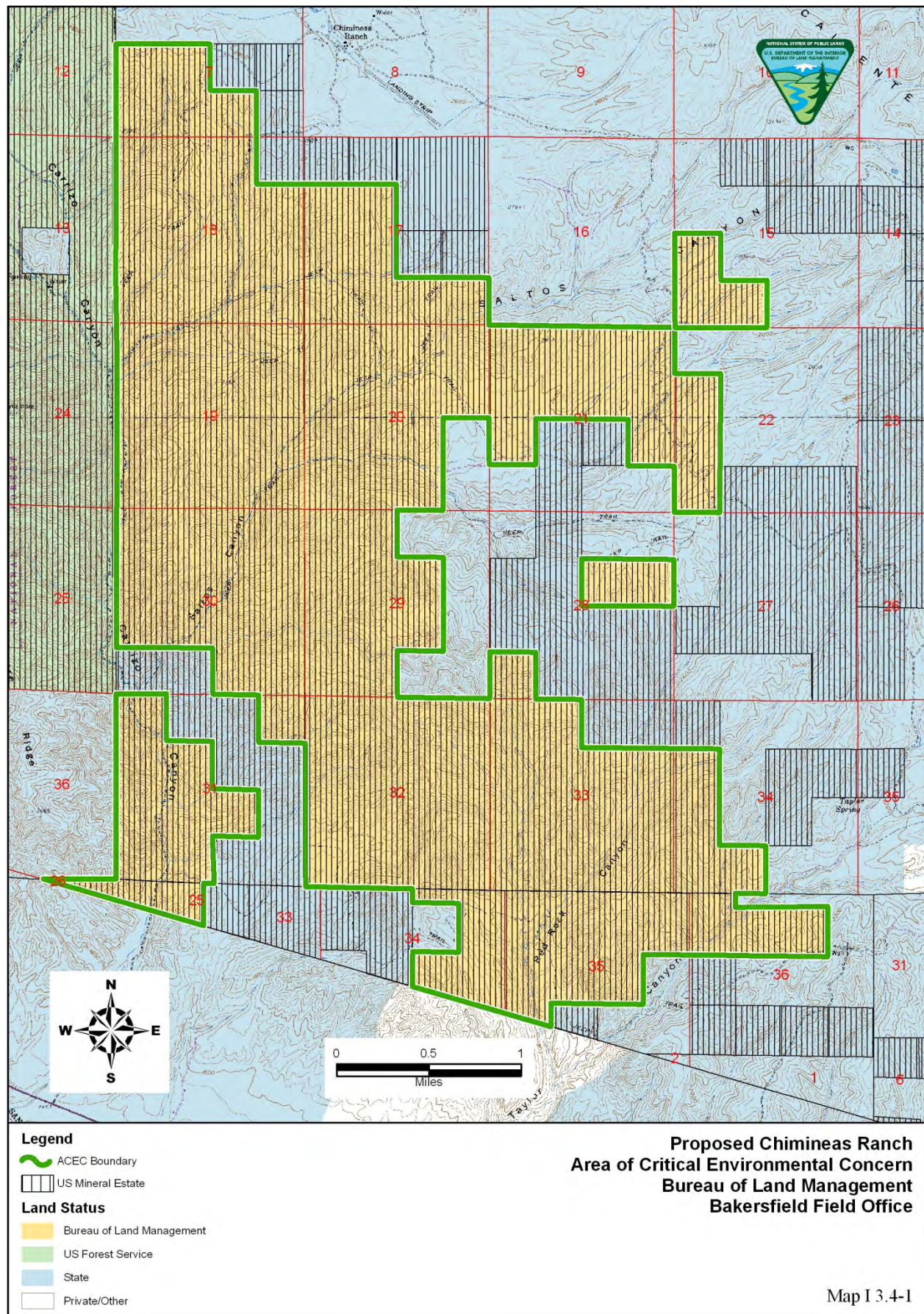
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The proposed ACEC contains habitat for federally listed wildlife species. The area may be used as a dispersal corridor connecting species from the San Emigdio Mountains to the La Panza Range.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	No	Natural process and systems may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	While the proposed ACEC contains oak woodlands and riparian habitats, which are an important wildlife and plant community, the area does not represent more than locally significant qualities.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	No	The area is not particularly rare or vulnerable to adverse change as it is surrounded by the USFS and CDFG Ecological Reserve.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	Although a number of the federally listed San Joaquin Valley species are present, their occurrence is uncommon and do not occur in sufficient numbers that would warrant protection for this national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.5 COMPENSATION LANDS

General Location: The proposed Compensation Lands ACEC will include all lands acquired as compensation under the Endangered Species Act to offset habitat loss from a permitted project. Principally these compensation lands will occur in the San Joaquin Valley and those existing parcels of compensation lands are currently located in western Kern County.

Current Public Surface Acreage: 283 acres

Current Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 80 acres

Current Total Proposed ACEC: 283 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Compensation Lands ACEC will only include public lands that have been acquired as compensation to offset habitat loss from authorized projects. Until these lands are identified by the USFWS and CDFG, their specific location and attributes are unknown, but will, by definition, include habitat for federally listed animal and/or plant species. These lands are to be managed in perpetuity as habitat for the listed species impacted by the project's habitat disturbance. Under certain circumstances, lesser quality habitat that could be improved through habitat restoration to provide long-term habitat for the identified species may be accepted.

Habitat compensation is commonly used in the San Joaquin Valley by the USFWS and CDFG to secure long-term habitat for the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species such as San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, giant kangaroo rat, Tipton kangaroo rat, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, Kern mallow, San Joaquin woolly threads, and California jewelflower. It is standard practice for projects that cause habitat loss of these species to be required to secure land in fee title or conservation easement to ensure such lands would be managed in perpetuity for the impacted species. Compensation lands are usually located within "red zone" habitat preserves or "green zone" habitat linkages. Occasionally, specialty preserves are created for listed species that have limited distributions and compensation lands can be used to acquire such preserves.

The proposed ACEC currently includes four parcels donated to BLM as compensation to offset habitat loss from authorized projects occurring in Kern County.

Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The proposed areas (both existing and to be acquired) are required to have habitat for and extant populations of the federally listed animal species for which these areas were purchased as off-set for projects disturbing habitat.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The proposed areas (both existing and to be acquired) are required to have habitat for and extant populations of the federally listed plant species for which these areas were purchased as off-set for projects disturbing habitat.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	These areas are considered to be more than locally significant as either USFWS or CDFG has identified them as having values that are acceptable compensation for habitat lost due to surface disturbing activities in accordance with the ESA and CESA.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	These areas prior to identification as compensation must receive approval as appropriate compensation lands by either USFWS or CDFG. This approval identified qualities in these lands worthy of protection.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	These areas contain habitat and extant populations of federally listed plant and animal species. Identification of these species as federally listed elevates the management of their habitats as a national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.6 CYRUS CANYON

General Location: The proposed Cyrus Canyon ACEC is located in Kern County within the Kern River Valley approximately three miles southeast of Kernville and northeast of Isabella Lake. The area is adjacent to the Sequoia National Forest.

Public Surface Acreage: 5,373 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 1 acre

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 4,987 acres (1 acre Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 5,374 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Cyrus Canyon ACEC has been nominated principally for its significant occurrence of the BLM California sensitive *Mimulus shevockii* (Kelso Creek Monkeyflower). Vegetation in the area consists of non-native grasslands, juniper-grey pine woodlands, and chaparral, in the Kern River Valley region of the Sierra Nevada Mountains with elevations ranging from 2,000 to 5,000 feet.

Kelso Creek Monkeyflower is endemic to Kern County, principally occurs in the Kelso Creek Valley watershed. A number of populations occur to the south in Jawbone Canyon; however the proposed ACEC represents the northern most extent of known populations of this species.

Throughout its small range (70 square miles), Kelso Creek Monkeyflower continues to be threatened by habitat loss from urbanization, off-highway vehicle use, livestock grazing, and agricultural land use. Known habitat in Cyrus Canyon has been lost to trespass by an adjacent homeowner. Cross country vehicular travel has occurred in recent years, despite past efforts to discourage this use which impacts sensitive Kelso Creek Monkeyflower habitat. Detrimental effects from livestock grazing include trampling of habitat, deposition of manure on plants, and outright consumption of plants. Cow flocks are a problem because they can easily bury these tiny plants (pers. comm. Dr. Kearns, 2009).

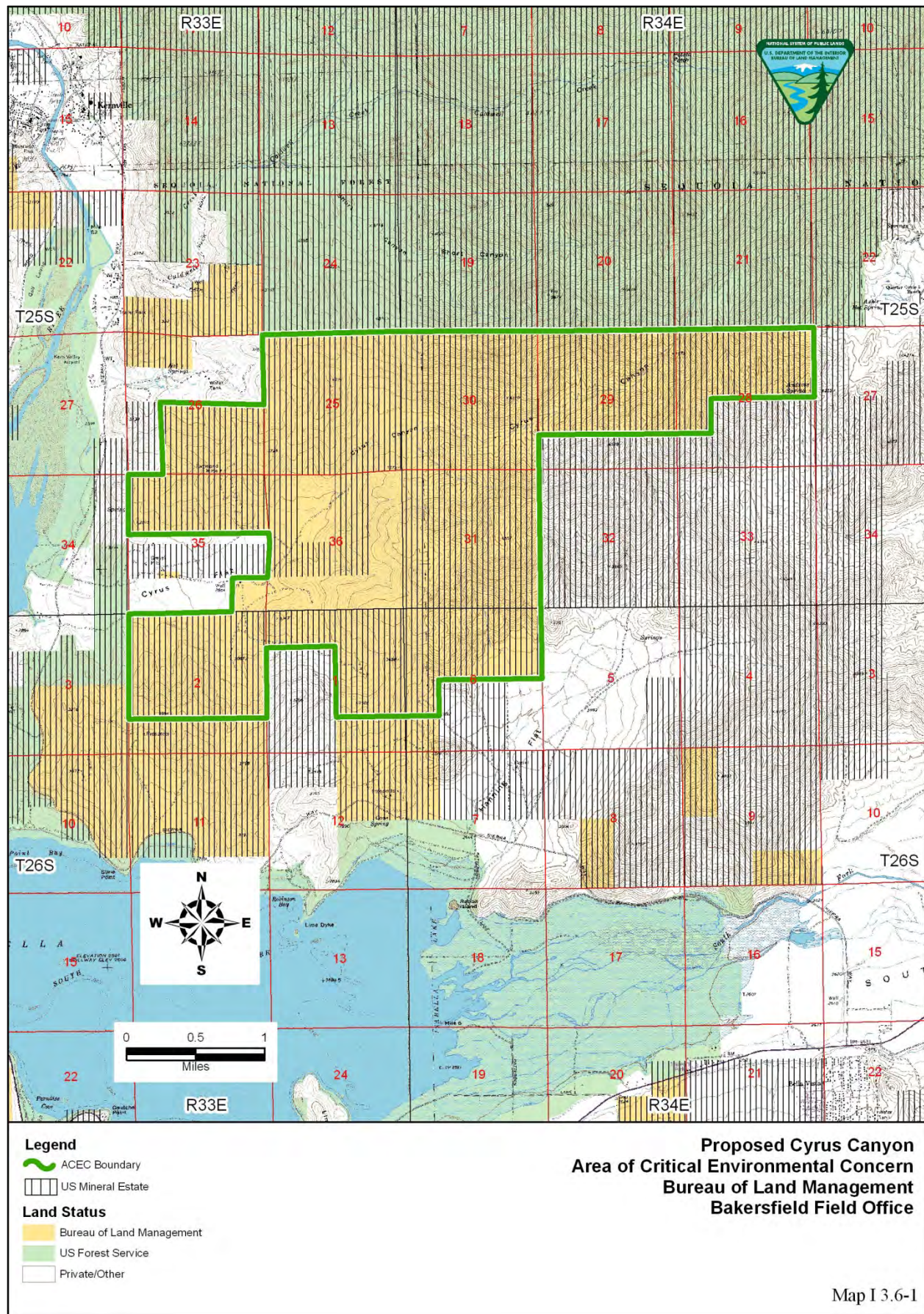
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Fish and wildlife resource may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The proposed ACEC contains habitat for and extant populations of a BLM sensitive plant species: the Kelso Creek Monkeyflower.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The proposed ACEC contains one of 10 known populations occurring within the Kern River and Kelso Creek valleys. This population represents the most northern extent of the species recorded in recent years.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Kelso Creek Monkeyflower is a rare, fragile plant species identified as a BLM California sensitive species. It is threatened throughout its small range, by habitat loss from urbanization, off-highway vehicle use, grazing, and agricultural land use.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	No national priority concerns are known in the area.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.7 EAST TEMBLOR RANGE

General Location: The proposed East Temblor Range ACEC is located in southwestern Kern County approximately six miles west of the city of Taft and spans the ridgeline to the east of the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

Public Surface Acreage: 8,213 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 1,541 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 8,167 acres (195 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 9,754 acres

Area Description:

The proposed East Temblor Range ACEC includes public land and federal mineral estate that was nominated through the public scoping process principally for its rare and unique upper Sonoran sub-shrub scrub plant community. The nomination suggested the area contributes to a corridor linking San Joaquin Valley and CPNM. Located on the eastern slopes of the Temblor Range with elevations ranging from 2,500 to 3,600 feet, the proposed ACEC is entirely within the Temblor NCLWMA.

Vegetation in the area consists of upper Sonoran sub-shrub scrub community. The rare plant association (*Ericameria linearifolia*) that occurs through portions of the area is located in several regions of southern California.

The area contains habitat for federally listed giant kangaroo rat at scattered locations, San Joaquin Kit fox and blunt-nosed leopard lizard at lower slopes, and California listed San Joaquin antelope squirrel. The habitat present, however, is considered marginally suitable for many of these listed species due to the steep terrain and is not identified in the *Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley* as a reserve or core area. The area does, however, serve as a linkage between the CPNM and the western San Joaquin Valley, and is identified in the SJV Recovery Plan as a corridor.

Management objectives of the NCLWMA include improving and maintaining shrub communities that benefit wildlife species, stabilizing steep unproductive slopes to reduce erosion, and improving recreation opportunities by improving hunting access and designating routes. Management actions to meet these objectives have provided adequate protection of the relevant values and special management attention from ACEC designation would not necessarily provide additional protection to the values present.

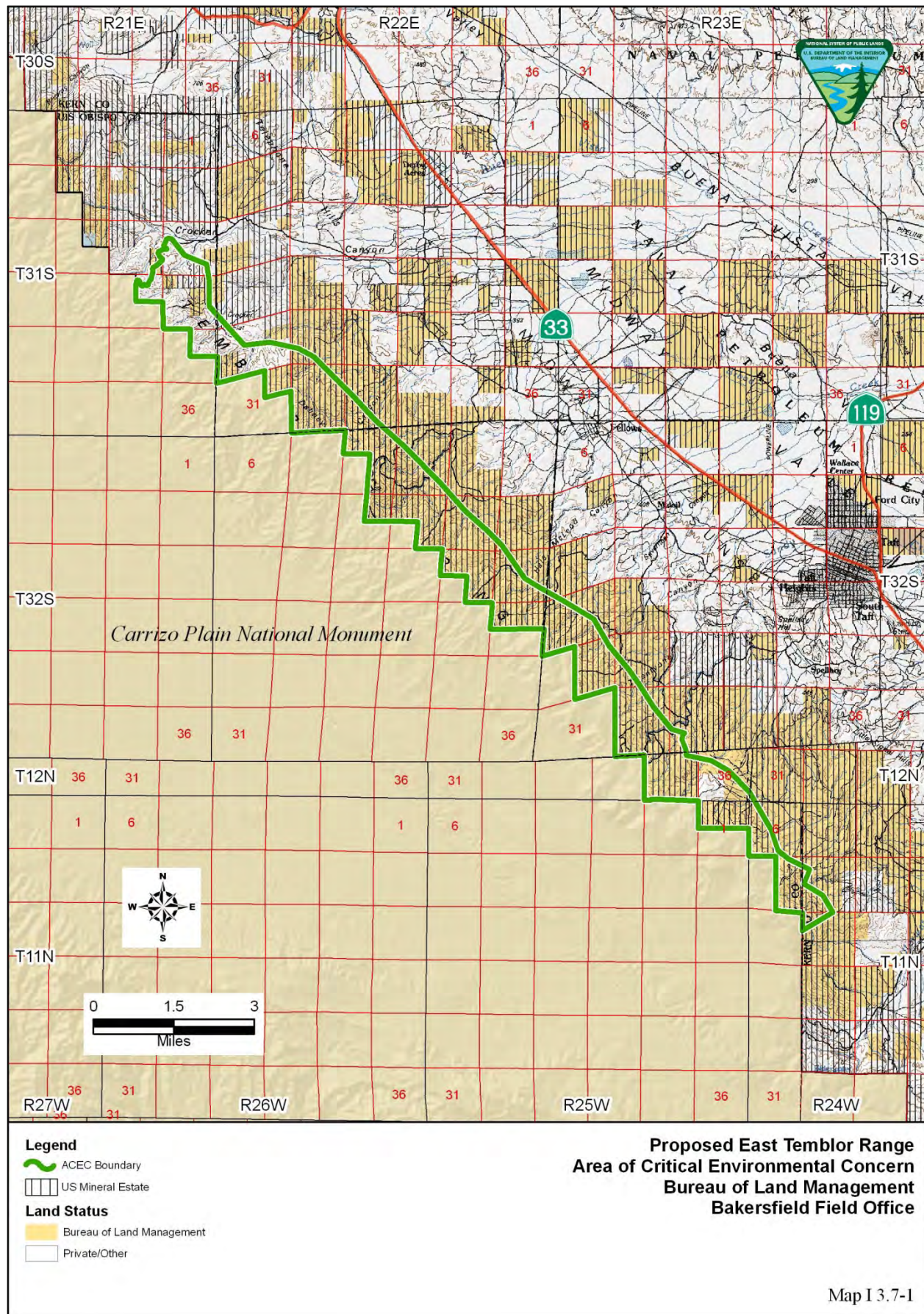
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area is known to contain habitat for the San Joaquin suite of federally listed species.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area include habitat for the rare <i>Ericameria linearifolia</i> vegetation association.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	The values in the area do not have more than locally significant qualities. The habitat for many of the San Joaquin suite of species is considered marginally suitable due to the steep terrain of the area.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	No	While the vegetation association is considered rare, it is located in several regions of southern California. The area has been exposed to increased off-highway vehicle use, but through route designation impacts to relevant values will be minimized.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	Although a number of the federally listed San Joaquin Valley species are present, their occurrence is uncommon and do not occur in sufficient numbers that would warrant protection for this national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.8 ERSKINE CREEK

General Location: The proposed Erskine Creek ACEC is in Kern County within the Kern River Valley less than one mile southeast of the town of Lake Isabella and adjacent to the Sequoia National Forest.

Public Surface Acreage: 3,015 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 1,126 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 3,957 acres (1,004 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 4,141 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Erskine Creek ACEC has been nominated principally for its relatively extensive marble/limestone outcrops with caves, riparian woodland, and habitat for BLM California sensitive plant and animal species. Vegetation in the area consists of non-native grasslands, blue oak-grey pine woodlands, chaparral, Mojavean pinyon woodland, Mojavean desert scrub, and riparian woodland, in the Kern River Valley region of the Sierra Nevada Mountains with elevations ranging from 3,000 to 6,000 feet.

The area is underlain by metasedimentary, metavolcanic, and granitic rocks. There are relatively extensive marble/limestone outcrops in which caves have developed. Currently, three caves are known, each with vertical entrances up to 120 feet deep; also several small chimneys or openings are also known in this vicinity. These are the only vertical caving opportunities in the region.

The riparian area along the creek includes sycamores and willows and provides habitat for many Neotropical birds along the drainage. The caves are known to provide habitat for Townsend big-eared bats and may contain unique cave-adapted species. The rare, BLM sensitive Piute Mountains jewelflower is known to occur here, and there is a high potential for occurrence of the Kern Canyon larkspur, also a rare, BLM sensitive species.

All of the proposed ACEC, except for Section 24, is within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area (NCLWMA) established on January 26, 1962, by Public Land Order 2594. The NCLWMA is cooperatively managed with the California Department of Fish and Game under current public land laws, to improve and maintain a diverse assemblage of vegetative communities to benefit wildlife resources and recreational opportunities.

About two-thirds of this proposed ACEC is also within the Piute Cypress Wilderness Study Area (CA-010-046), which was recommended as unsuitable by the BLM.

The Valley View Mining District, established in 1865 encompassed the Erskine Creek area, and intermittent mining activity continued through the 1910s. These early mines were developed for gold, antimony and copper. During the 1950s uranium and tungsten were discovered and prospected in three locations throughout the proposed ACEC. In the 1970s and 1980s the Erskine Creek drainage has been prospected for placer gold and garnets resulting in numerous unnamed prospects on public lands within the Erskine Creek drainage.

The proposed Erskine Creek ACEC has moderate to high potential for gold and tungsten, and low to moderate potential for development of limestone. There are 30 mining claims within the area.

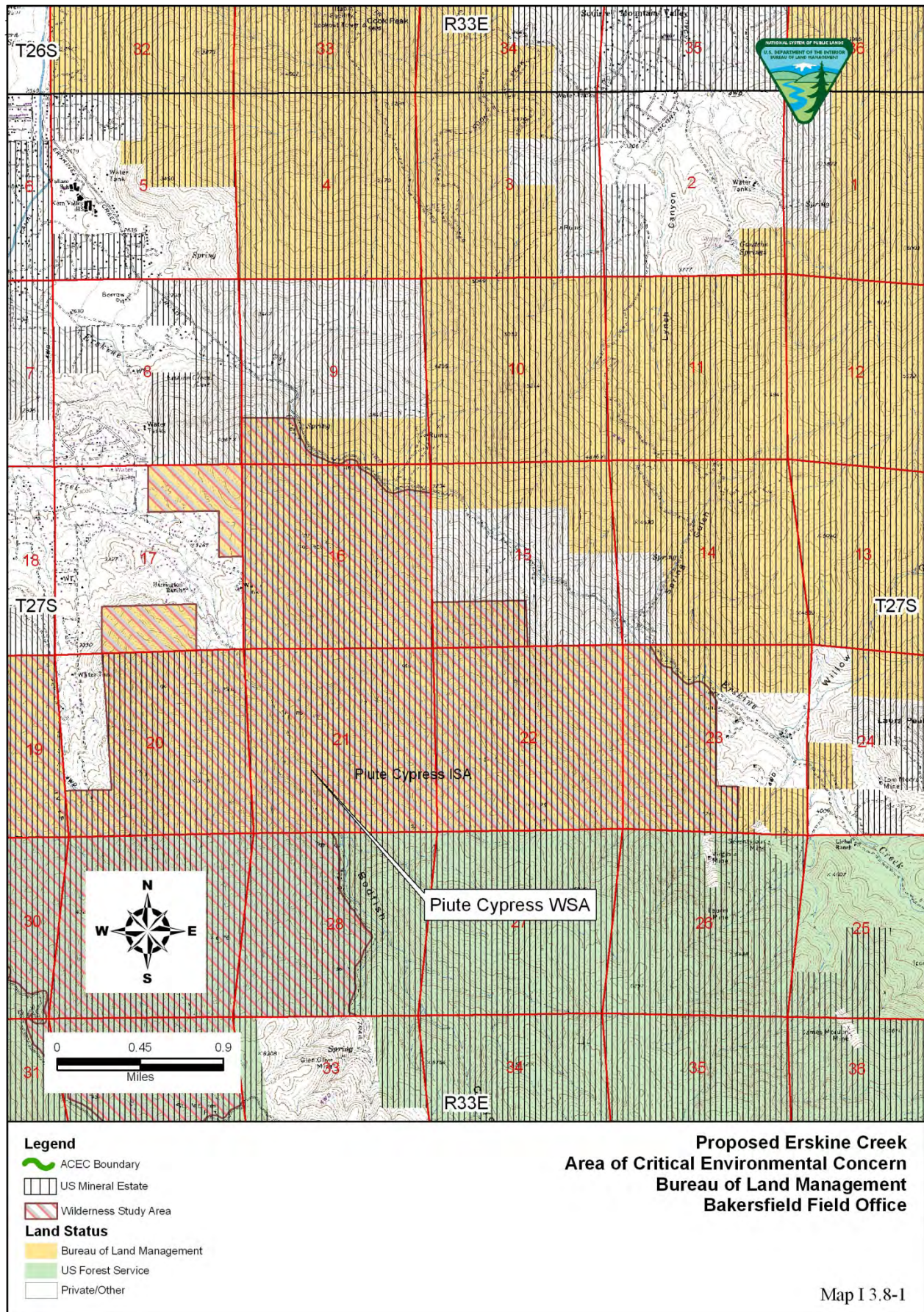
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	Caves in the area are known to provide habitat for the BLM California sensitive Townsend big-eared bat. Many neotropical birds nest and migrate along the drainage.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The proposed ACEC contains several known caves with vertical entrances; a rare feature on public land in the region. In addition, the area provides habitat for two rare, BLM sensitive plant species and presents exemplary riparian communities.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area's rich mining history, dating from the 1865 through the 1980s, give cause for concern since high potential for locatable minerals still exist and could be explored if the area were to be released from Wilderness Study status, which may detrimentally affect the present biological values.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The area contains habitat for a number of plant and animal species identified as BLM California sensitive species.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	No national priority concerns are known in the area.

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.9 FREEBORN MOUNTAIN-HUBBARD PEAK

General Location: The proposed Freeborn Mountain-Hubbard Peak ACEC is located in south central San Luis Obispo County, 33 miles east of Santa Margarita, 40 miles west of Buttonwillow, and just west of the community of California Valley in the northern portion of the Carrizo Plain.

Public Surface Acreage: 6,986 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 6,986 acres (0 acres Split Estate)

Other Land Owner Acreage: 0 acres

Total Proposed ACEC: 6,986 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Freeborn Mountain-Hubbard Peak ACEC includes public lands and federal mineral estate that was nominated through the public scoping process principally for its scenic values and vegetative communities. These peaks border the northwestern edge of the Carrizo Plain and stand 1,000 feet above the plain at 3,300 and 2,960 feet elevation respectively. They separate the Carrizo Plain from San Juan Creek and are visible from State Highway 58 for almost 20 miles as one traverses the plain. While these peaks are prominent in the middle-ground view for a considerable length of time, the La Panza Range is located as their backdrop into which they tend to blend.

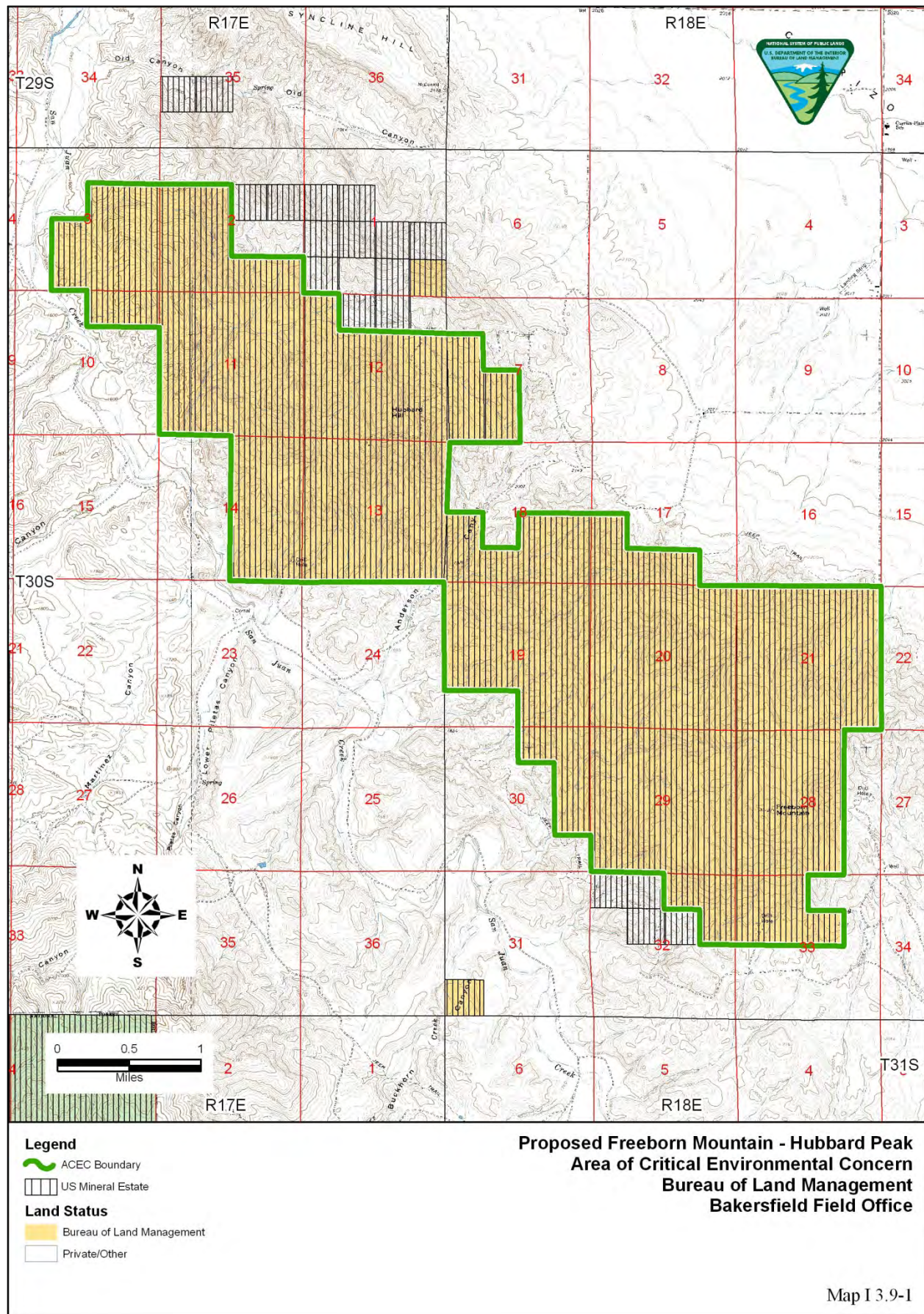
Vegetation in the proposed ACEC consists of mixed chaparral-blue oak woodlands that are common to the coastal mountain ranges. There are no known rare or unique plant species or communities in the area.

Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	The peaks in the proposed ACEC are prominent in the middle-ground view and may have scenic values. Cultural values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Fish and wildlife resource may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	No	Natural process and systems may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	These peaks do not have more than locally significant qualities as they are similar to the adjacent Los Padres National Forest backdrop.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	No	The mixed chaparral-blue oak woodlands are not unique or exemplary when compared to other plant communities of the same type. The area is not considered to be a unique or rare geologic feature.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	No national priority concerns are known in the area.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.10 GRANITE CAVE

General Location: The proposed Granite Cave ACEC is in Kern County within the Kern River Valley on the northern slopes of the Piute Mountains overlooking the community of South Lake and adjacent to the Sequoia National Forest. .

Public Surface Acreage: 31 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 11 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 42 acres (0 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 42 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Granite Cave ACEC includes public lands and federal mineral estate principally nominated for its significant cultural resource and unique geologic feature. The area is characterized by Pinyon Pine Juniper Woodland at an elevation of 3,200 feet.

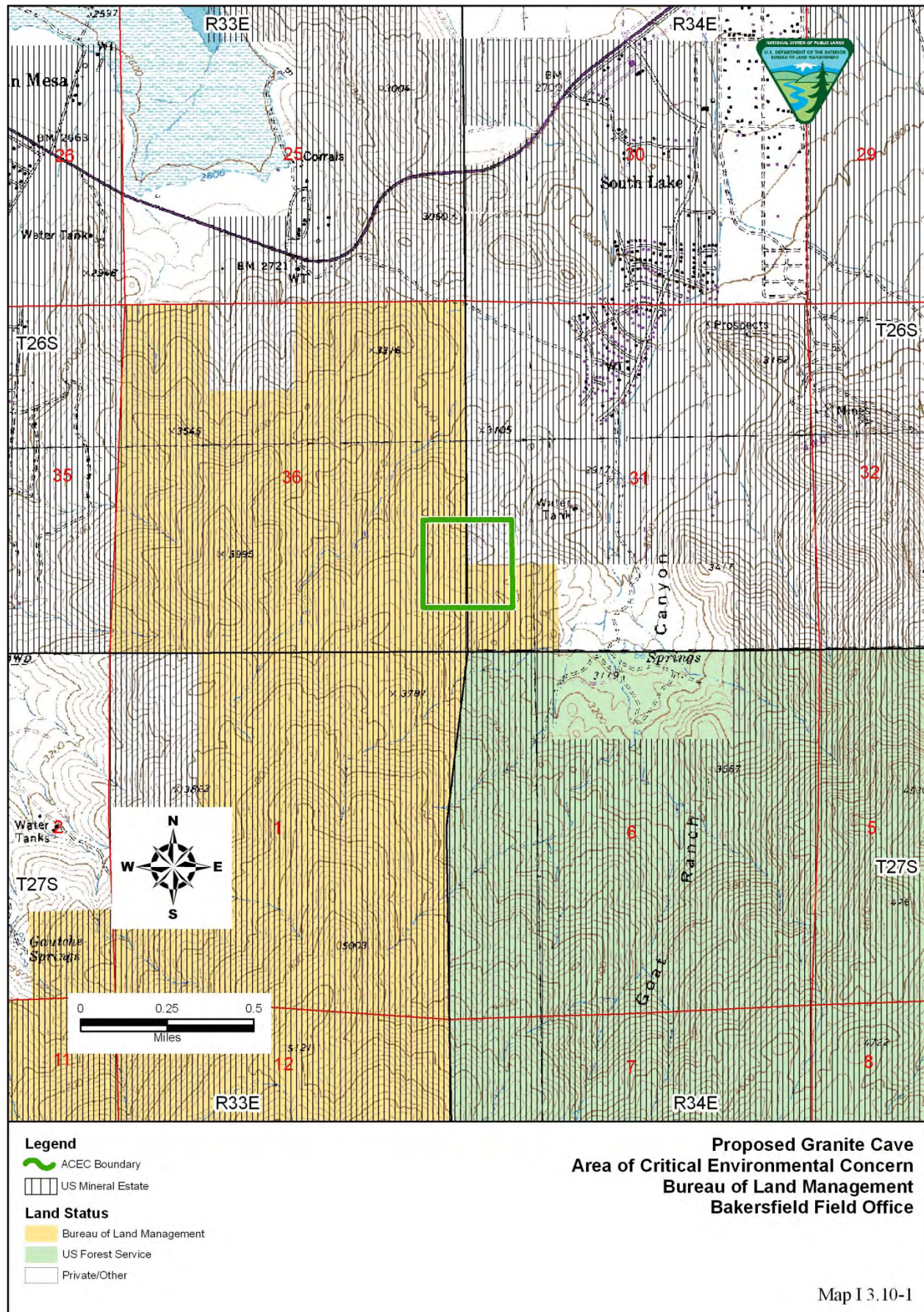
The proposed ACEC, its specific location withheld to protect cultural resources, contains one notable archaeological site associated with a unique cave feature.

Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The cave within the proposed ACEC is known to contain significant cultural resources and is of importance to contemporary Native Americans.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Fish and wildlife resource may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The cave itself is a rare geologic feature within the landscape.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The ACEC contains an archaeological site of importance to contemporary Native Americans that is considered as an important location for traditional cultural practices. The geologic cave feature is unique to public lands within the region giving it distinctiveness over other geologic features.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Cultural resources found within the ACEC are both fragile and irreplaceable examples of the prehistory of California.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Cultural resources within the area are likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.11 HOPPER MOUNTAIN

General Location: The proposed Hopper Mountain ACEC is in Ventura County approximately five miles north of Fillmore in the foothills of Hopper Mountain. The area is adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest and the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge.

Public Surface Acreage: 2,027 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 2,951 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 4,973 acres (2,947 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 4,978 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Hopper Mountain ACEC includes private and federal lands, including both BLM and USFWS. The area has been principally nominated for its important roosting and nesting habitat for the federally listed endangered California condor. The area is within the Sespe-Piru Critical Condor Area.

Vegetation communities within the area include grassland, oak woodland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, oak woodland, and riparian habitat. Located in steep, mountainous terrain with elevations ranging from 750 to 3,400 feet, the nomination is adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest, the Sespe Condor Sanctuary, and the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge. The proposed ACEC also contains a portion of the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge managed by the USFWS.

The April 1996 California Condor Recovery Plan recommends that management of the Sespe Condor Sanctuary, Sespe-Piru Critical Condor Habitat Area and Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge continue to be focused on maintaining suitable nesting and foraging habitat for condors.

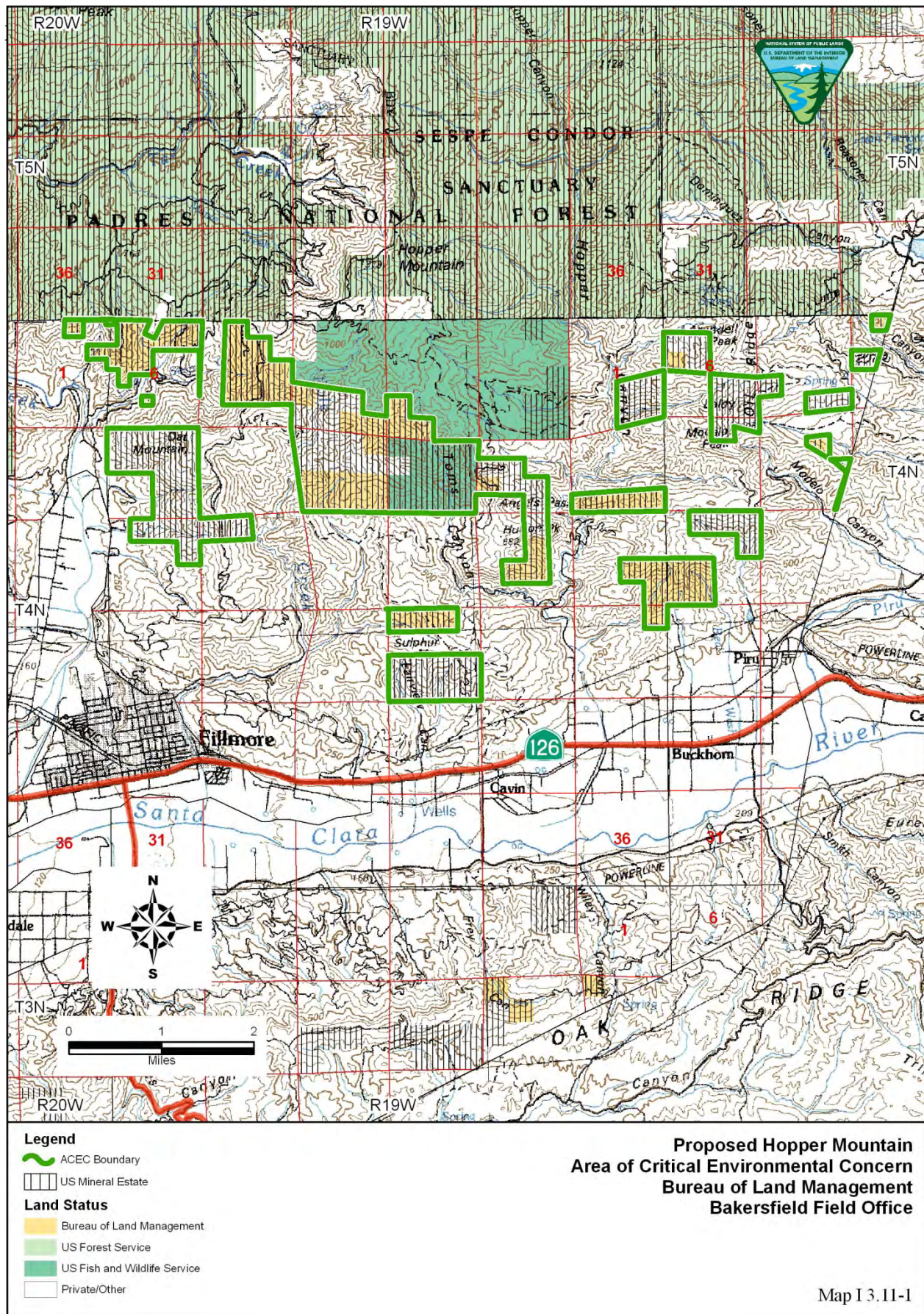
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The proposed area is important California condor (a species that is federally endangered) roosting and nesting habitat.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	No	Natural process and systems may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The proposed ACEC is adjacent to three important California condor areas: Sespe Condor Sanctuary, Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge and Sespe-Piru Critical Condor Area and is considered to be the only area used by the southern California condor population for nesting.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Nesting habitat has qualities that make it sensitive and vulnerable to adverse change. Noise and general human activity in the area due to recreation activities, communication sites, and oilfield operations may reduce the success for recovery of California condor.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The presence of habitat for the federally listed California condor elevates the area as a national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.12 IRISH HILLS

General Location: The proposed Irish Hills ACEC is in San Luis Obispo County approximately six miles southwest of the city of San Luis Obispo, and is adjacent to the Montana de Oro State Park.

Public Surface Acreage: 1,090 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 724 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 1,654 acres (564 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 1,814 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Irish Hills ACEC includes state private and federal land nominated principally for its rare vegetation types. Located on the western slopes of the Irish Hills encompassing portions of Diablo Canyon with elevations ranging from 600 to 1,400 feet, the nomination is adjacent to and contains a portion of the Montana de Oro State Park.

The primary vegetation is coast live oak series, Bishop Pine series, and various shrub and chaparral series including chamise-black sage, coyote brush, and whiteleaf chaparral in areas of serpentine soils. Bishop pine is a rare vegetation type, but plentiful in the Coon Creek watershed. Bishop pine is a closed-cone pine, dependent on fire for seed release and regeneration (Hoover 1970). The public lands in the proposed ACEC also include some of the largest oaks in San Luis Obispo County and manzanitas two feet in diameter and forty feet high. Three federally listed plants, *Arctostaphylos morroensis* (Morro manzanita), *Cirsium fontinale* var. *obispoense* (San Luis Obispo fountain thistle), and *Eriodictyon altissimum* (Indian Knob mountain balm), are known to occur west of the proposed ACEC and may occur within the proposed ACEC as well. Also present in the area are nine BLM California sensitive plants (*Agrostis hooveri*, *Arctostaphylos cruzensis*, *Arctostaphylos osoensis*, *Arctostaphylos pechoensis*, *Arctostaphylos tomentosa* subsp. *daciticola*, *Calochortus obispoensis*, *Castilleja densiflora* subsp. *obispoensis*, *Dudleya abramsii* subsp. *murina*, and *Fritillaria ojaiensis*) and an additional seven CNPS list 4 species.

The City of San Luis Obispo, The Nature Conservancy, the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, and California State Parks are currently engaged in increasing the size of Montana de Oro State Park, conserving additional acreage in the Irish Hills, and planning to develop a coastal trail across this landscape, which would most likely include public lands. The proposed ACEC would complement their efforts and assist in preserving an important section of central coastal habitat.

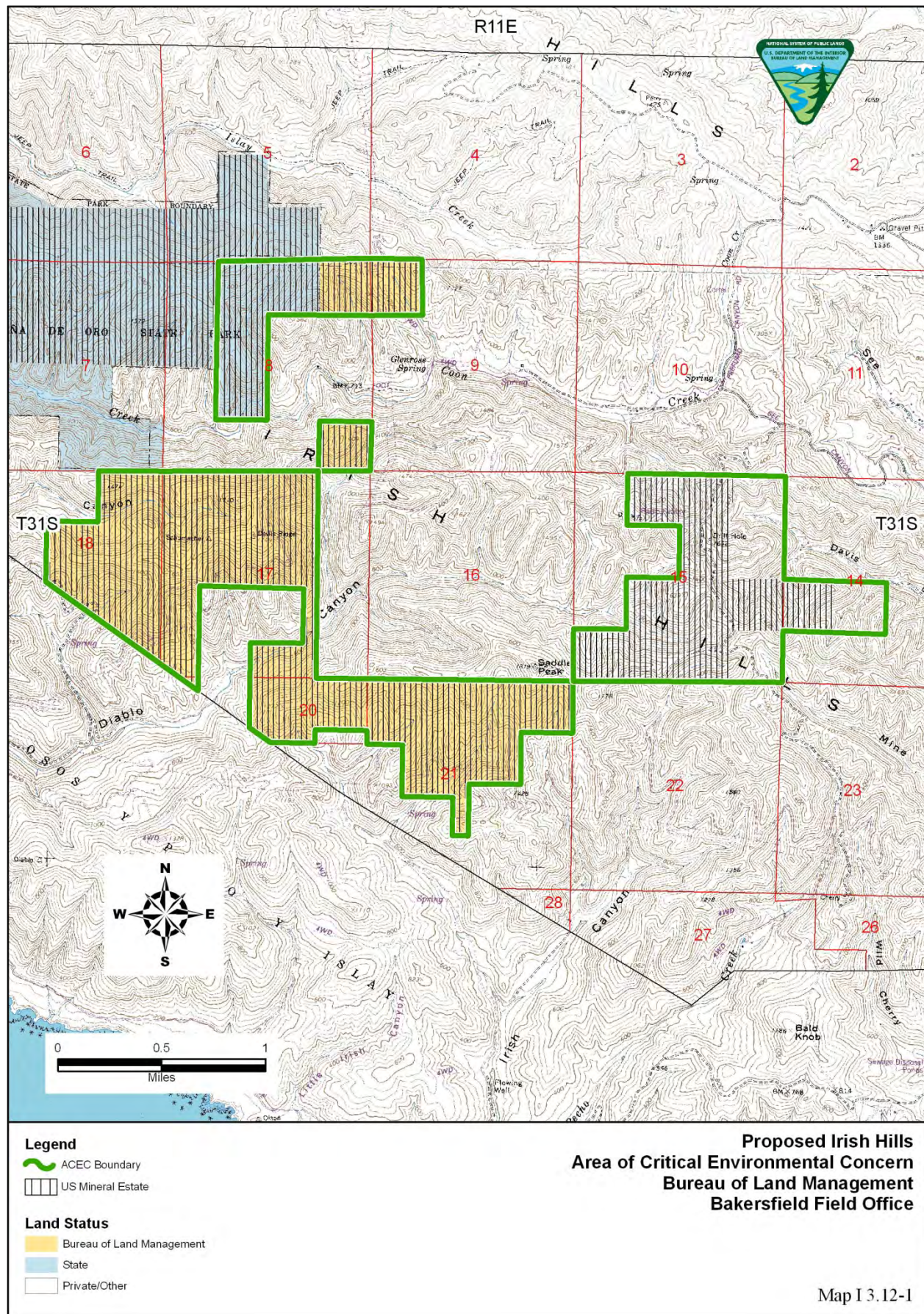
Although not contributing to the relevant criteria, the proposed Irish Hills ACEC also provides crucial corridor habitat for wide-ranging wildlife species, including mountain lions, black bears and grey foxes.

Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Fish and wildlife resource may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area provides habitat for rare and endemic plant species and communities including three federally listed plant species as well as nine BLM sensitive plant species. The area also contains the rare vegetation type Bishop pine.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	This area contributes to conservation efforts by state and local governments to preserve adjacent natural areas from loss to development and urbanization.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The numbers of rare plant species and the extent of their populations found within the ACEC are considered unique and exemplary.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	These areas contain habitat and extant populations of federally listed plant species. Identification of these species as federally listed elevates the management of their habitats as a national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.13 KAWEAH

General Location: The proposed Kaweah ACEC is comprised of two parcels located in northern Tulare County, five miles north and six miles east of the community of Three Rivers, within the foothills and western slope of the Sierra Nevada Range. These areas contain the Case Mountain, Milk Ranch Peak, and North Fork areas and are adjacent to Sequoia National Park.

Public Surface Acreage: 26,891 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 6,668 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 26,440 acres (150 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 33,559 acres

Area Description:

This proposed ACEC, nominated principally for its biological, geological and cultural resources, expands the existing Case Mountain ACEC to include the North Fork of the Kaweah River and surrounding lands. The area consists of private and federal land on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains ranging in elevation from 1,000 to 6,800 feet and is adjacent to Sequoia National Park.

Vegetation in the proposed ACEC ranges from oak woodlands in the lower elevations to conifer woodlands, including giant sequoia groves, in the higher elevations. Riparian vegetative communities are present along the North Fork of the Kaweah River, Salt Creek and its associated ponds. The mixed conifer stands consist of incense cedar, Jeffrey pine, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, white fir and California nutmeg. Giant sequoias grow in three separate groves located on public lands near the top of Case Mountain. Five BLM California sensitive plant species are present within the proposed ACEC: *Eriogonum nudum* var. *murinum*, *Mimulus norrisii*, *Brodiaea insignis*, *Calochortus nestonii*, and *Ribes tulareense*. The last three are found growing in the Case Mountain area, where several hundred acres of suitable habitat are present. Three CNPS list 4 plants also are present (*Mimulus inconspicuus*, *Nemophila parviflora* var. *quercifolia*, *Streptanthus farnsworthianus*, as well as one CNPS list 3 plant, *Calystegia malacophylla* var. *berryi*.

A number of special status animal species occur in the proposed ACEC. California spotted owls and pileated woodpeckers have been observed in the mixed conifer and sequoia groves. Pacific fisher has been documented along Salt Creek Road. Several bat species, including four BLM California sensitive species, long eared myotis, fringed myotis, small-footed myotis and spotted bat make use of the area. Southwestern pond turtles occur along Salt Creek and in the associated ponds. High numbers of juvenile pond turtles occur in the large ponds at the base of Salt Creek.

The Case Mountain area is entirely underlain by granitic rocks. In the North Fork of the Kaweah area, there are extensive pendants of metasedimentary rocks, including extensive outcrops of marble. These karst formations include caves and springs that provide habitat for various bats, rare plants, and specialized cave organisms.

The North Fork of the Kaweah contains the Advance Colony site, a part of the Kaweah Colony, a socialist utopian society formed in the 1880's. In 1884 a group of "utopian socialists" established the settlement of Arcady (or Haskell's bluff) in the vicinity of the present day community of Kaweah. In 1886 they established Advance, a construction camp along the North Fork of the Kaweah, to access timber lands about eight miles to the east. Road construction began about three miles to the north of Advance and terminated in untouched forests of giant sequoia and other conifers. After four years of hand-labor, the road was finished and a lumber mill erected. At this time Sequoia National Park was established and members of the colony were arrested for cutting timber in the Park. By 1892 the settlements were abandoned.

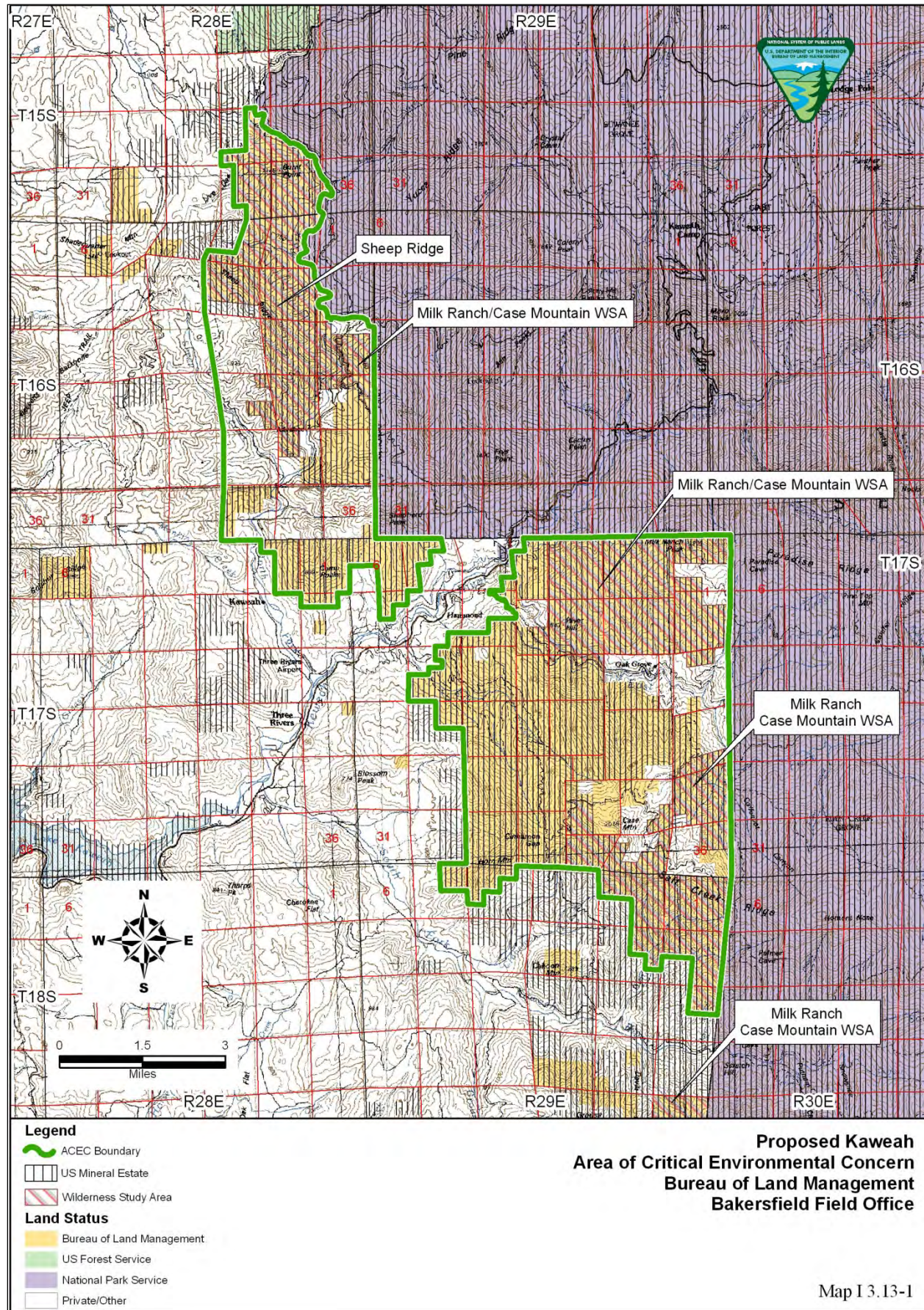
The proposed ACEC include the corridor of the North Fork of the Kaweah River, a river segment being studied for Wild and Scenic River suitability, and portions of the Sheep Ridge and Milk Ranch/Case Mountain Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). Both WSAs have been recommended as unsuitable for wilderness.

Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The North Fork Kaweah portion of the proposed ACEC contains historic site dating from the 1880s.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area provides habitat for numerous BLM sensitive animal species.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The Case Mountain portion of the proposed ACEC contains giant sequoia groves, a rare plant community, and five BLM California sensitive plant species. In addition, scattered in the area are a series of karst formations including caves and springs that are considered rare geologic features.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The ACEC harbors a wide diversity of plants and animals, many of which are not found elsewhere on public lands in the Bakersfield FO and some of which are considered rare or sensitive species.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The caves and karst spring are rare and fragile features that provide habitat for unique species identified as a BLM California sensitive species.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	No national priority concerns are known in the area.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.14 KETTLEMAN HILLS

General Location: The proposed Kettleman Hills ACEC is located just west of Kettleman City in Kings County.

Public Surface Acreage: 6,726 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 22,148 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 13,693 acres (6,969 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 28,874 acres

Area Description:

The proposed ACEC expands the existing Kettleman Hills ACEC to include the Kettleman Middle Dome area was nominated principally for its important habitat for the San Joaquin suite of listed plant and animal species, in addition to its significant paleontological resources. The area consists of public land and federal mineral estate on the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley and foothills of the Inner South Coast Ranges and range in elevation from 300 to 1,100 feet.

The area provides a large scale remnant of arid foothills and valley habitats of western San Joaquin Valley that include grassland, alkali scrub, and oak woodland. In addition, Middle Dome includes an extant population of San Joaquin wooly-threads in a region where most populations have been extirpated.

The area contains occupied habitat for several San Joaquin Valley federal and state listed plant and animal species including the San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, giant kangaroo rat, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, and San Joaquin wooly-threads and has been identified as a core recovery area and habitat linkage along the west side of the Valley. In addition, a wide variety of raptor species also use the area for nesting, foraging and wintering.

Rock formations exposed in the Kettleman Hills range in age from Pleistocene to Eocene. In these formations invertebrate marine fossils are abundant; however, marine and terrestrial vertebrate fossils are also found. The fossils identified from the area include mastodon, beaver, peccary, horse, camel, deer, sea lion, seal, porpoise, shale, turtle, shark and cormorant.

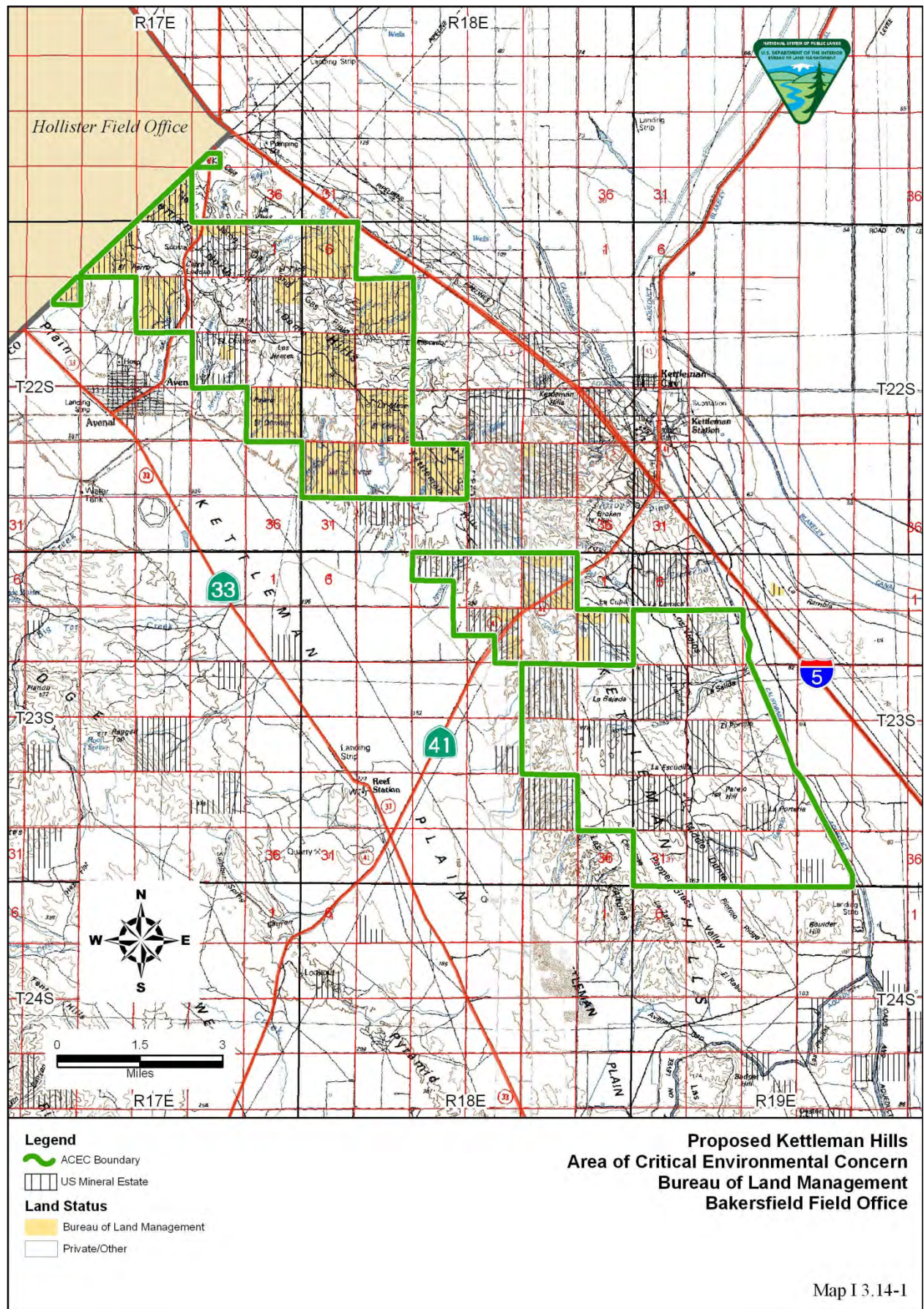
Numerous land use authorizations, including rights-of-way, oil and gas leases, and grazing leases occur in the area that have contributed to habitat degradation in some locations. Oil was first successfully produced here in 1928, and has since produced over 440 million barrels of oil from Eocene, Oligocene, and Miocene reservoirs. The area has seen a recent increase in oil development. Saltbush populations have disappeared across a large portion of the landscape or been depressed in some locations because of wildfire and livestock grazing. Loss of these shrubs has eliminated habitat for shrub-dependent species such as Le Conte's thrasher and sage sparrow. There has also been some mining of clay and gypsite from the area, but not from the fossiliferous sedimentary rocks. Furthermore, off-highway vehicle activity and hill climbs have increased in recent years where access has not been controlled.

Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area provides habitat for federally listed animal and plant species and includes habitat linkages. Furthermore, the rock formations provide nesting, foraging and wintering habitat for a wide variety of raptor species.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area provides a large scale remnant where the Valley upland habitats maintain ecological function and process. There is also occupied habitat for one federally listed plant species. Furthermore, the area is noted for its significant paleontological resources.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area has been identified as a core recovery area and habitat linkage for the listed species. In addition, the proposed ACEC includes an extant population of San Joaquin woolly-threads in a region where most populations have been extirpated. Furthermore, some habitat damage has occurred due to sheep grazing and OHV use.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The area has been actively producing oil for over 80 years and has seen a recent increase in oil development. There has also been some mining of clay and gypsite from the area. In addition, saltbush habitat is vulnerable to adverse change from wildfire and livestock grazing.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	These areas contain habitat and extant populations of federally listed plant and animal species. Identification of these species as federally listed elevates the management of their habitats as a national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.15 LOKERN-BUENA VISTA

General Location: The proposed Lokern-Buena Vista ACEC is located in western Kern County, eight miles southwest of the town of Buttonwillow, three miles north of the city of Taft. The area is east of the Temblor Mountain Range and north, west and southwest of the Elk Hills Range at the southwestern end of the San Joaquin Valley.

Public Surface Acreage: 11,352 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 58,122 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 15,462 acres (4,113 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 69,474 acres

Area Description:

The proposed ACEC expands the existing Lokern ACEC to include the Buena Vista Valley area was nominated principally for its important habitat for the San Joaquin suite of listed plant and animal species. The area consists of public land and federal mineral estate on the southwestern edge of the San Joaquin Valley with elevations ranging from 450 to 1,000 feet.

The area forms one of the largest relatively undisturbed remnants of the San Joaquin Valley habitats that are characterized by open grasslands, patches of saltbush scrub, and a dense growth of alkali sink scrub. In the 1990s, wildfires swept over a large portion of the area eliminating the saltbush stands; however, efforts have been started to restore scattered stands of saltbush.

The Lokern area contains most of the extant populations of the federally listed *Eremalche kernensis* (Kern mallow). The ACEC also provides habitat for the delisted *Eriastrum hooveri* (Hoover's woolly-star), six BLM California sensitive species (*Astragalus bornii* var. *bornii*, *Atriplex vallicola*, *Calochortus striatus*, *Lasthenia glabrata* subsp. *coulteri*, *Layia leucopappa*, and *Stylocine citroleum*) and four CNPS list 4 species (*Camissonia kernensis* subsp. *kernensis*, *Eriogonum gossypinum*, *Lasthenia ferrisiae*, and *Trichostema ovatum*).

The proposed ACEC sustains high population levels of the State listed San Joaquin antelope squirrel and the State and federally listed San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, giant kangaroo rat, and Tipton kangaroo rat. The area is within the western Kern County San Joaquin kit fox core population area. Long-term endangered species population monitoring study sites and several focused endangered species research projects have been located in the ACEC area. In addition, numerous BLM California sensitive animal species (short-nosed kangaroo rat, San Joaquin pocket mouse, long-billed curlew, mountain plover and ferruginous hawk) occur in the area.

The USFWS and CDFG identified the area as important for the recovery of federally listed species in the *Kern County Valley Floor HCP* that established the area as a reserve (red zone) to promote the conservation and recovery of endangered species. The area is managed so that surface disturbance is less than 10 percent of the surface area of individual public land parcels or 10 percent of adjoining public land parcels.

Numerous land use authorizations, including rights-of-way, oil and gas leases, and two grazing leases occur in the area that have contributed to habitat degradation in some locations. Several rights-of-ways for pipelines, transmission lines and roads occur in the area. There has also been recent interest in potential solar development due to the flat terrain and proximity to existing electric transmission lines. The proposed ACEC is in an area known to have high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas and there are current and long-existing oil and gas operations. In some sections containing long-existing oil field development, habitat disturbance exceeds the 10 percent objective for “red zone” reserves. Continued oil and gas exploration and development is expected in the area and large scale geophysical exploration surveys have been proposed.

Finally, the area is subject to unauthorized use, theft, vandalism, and trespass with household dumping occurring on a regular basis.

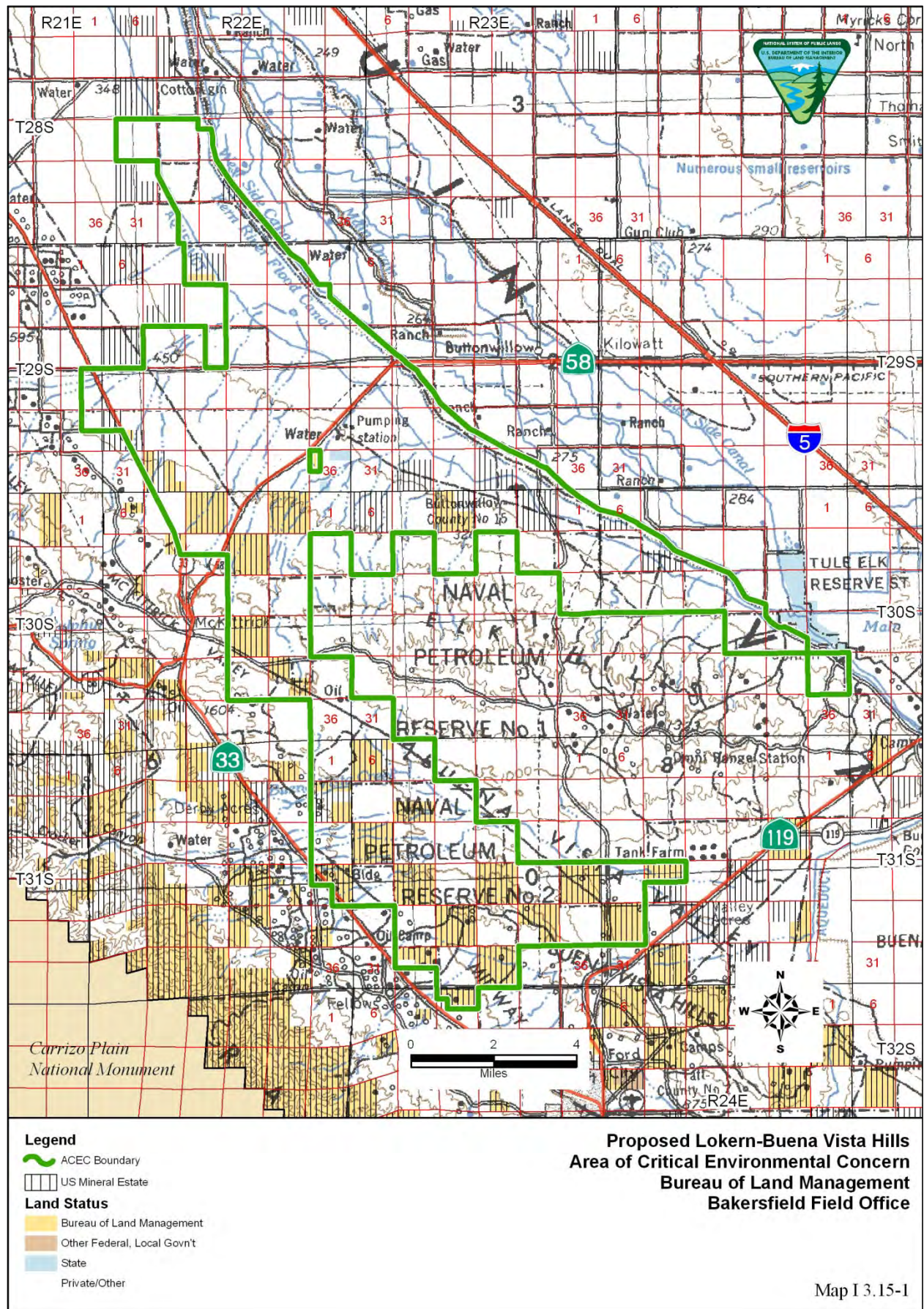
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area provides habitat for federally listed animal species, numerous sensitive animal species, and includes habitat linkages.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area provides large scale, undeveloped remnants of the San Joaquin Valley natural habitats. The area also contains the most extant populations of a federally listed plant species, as well as habitat for six BLM California sensitive plant species.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	This proposed ACEC has been identified as a “reserve” management zone to promote the conservation and recovery of federally listed species. In addition, the area includes the most extant populations of the federally listed plant Kern Mallow. Furthermore, habitat damage has occurred due to unauthorized use, vandalism, and trespass.

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The area is known to have high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas and has seen a recent increase in exploration and development. In addition, saltbush habitat is vulnerable to adverse change from wildfire and livestock grazing.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	These areas contain habitat and extant populations of federally listed plant and animal species. Identification of these species as federally listed elevates the management of their habitats as a national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.16 LOS OSOS

General Location: The proposed Los Osos ACEC is located in San Luis Obispo County within the town of Los Osos; it is contiguous with Morro Bay State Park and comprises a portion of the “greenbelt” connecting the area to Montana de Oro State Park.

Public Surface Acreage: 5 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 27 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 0 acres (0 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 32 acres

Area Description:

This proposed ACEC, nominated principally for its important cultural resources, unique and diverse plant communities and wildlife habitat, consists entirely of public land. The area is a stabilized sand dune system, located between the Baywood Park area of Los Osos and Morro Bay State Park.

The proposed ACEC contains portions of two archaeological sites, which consist of large shell midden and occupational deposits, and have the potential to reveal important information about the Obispeno Chumash culture – a people who relied heavily on coastal resources for their subsistence. These sites display qualities that indicate they are eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places. It should be noted that many local archaeological sites have been lost due to urbanization and residential development.

The proposed Los Osos ACEC consists of a stabilized dune system with robust examples of coastal scrub, coastal chaparral, and pygmy oak woodland composed of *Quercus agrifolia* (coast live oak), all considered sensitive habitats in the California Natural Diversity Database system. Vegetation types present include black sage series, California sagebrush series, mixed sage series, woollyleaf manzanita series, and coast live oak series (Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf 1995). There are also a number of lichens and mosses associated with the shrub vegetation. Populations of the federally-threatened *Arctostaphylos morroensis* (Morro manzanita) also occur in the proposed ACEC. Other notable rare plants present include *Erysimum capitatum* ssp. *lompocensis* (San Luis Obispo wallflower) and *Prunus fasciculata* var. *punctata* (sand almond). There is suitable habitat, but no observations for two BLM sensitive species: *Arctostaphylos cruzensis* (Arroyo de la Cruz manzanita) and *Sulcaria isidiifera* (splitting yarn lichen).

The proposed ACEC sustains populations of the federally-endangered Morro shoulderband snail and is designated snail critical habitat (USFWS 2009). It is also within the historic habitat for the endangered, and possibly extinct, Morro bay kangaroo rat. In addition, coast horned lizard, a Federal species of concern, has been identified in the proposed ACEC.

The Los Osos parcel was acquired in 2001 to serve as a catalyst among local, regional, state, and federal conservation efforts to initiate land conservation to conserve and recover these species and to preserve the unique coastal vegetation.

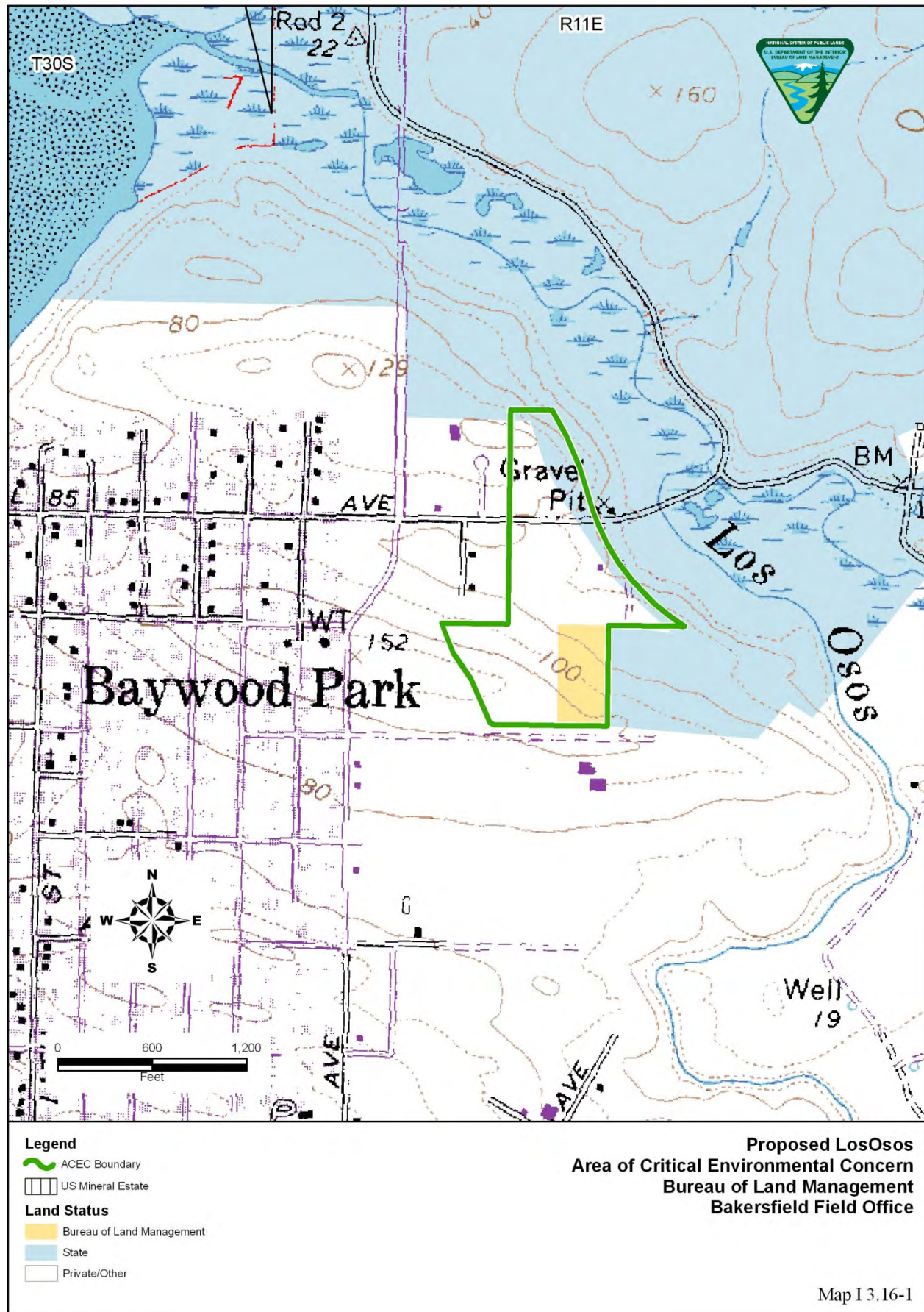
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The proposed ACEC contains two significant archaeological sites relating to the Native American use and settlement of the region. The area is also of importance to contemporary Native Americans.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The proposed ACEC contains designated Critical Habitat for the endangered Morro shoulderband snail and is also within the historic habitat for the endangered, and possibly extinct, Morro bay kangaroo rat.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area provides habitat for several rare and endemic plant species and communities including one federally listed plant species as well as several BLM California sensitive plant species.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The archaeological sites within the proposed ACEC represent some of the few remaining sites with high integrity within the cultural region. The area is part of a greenbelt that connects Morro Bay State Park to Montana de Oro State Park to conserve and recover the rare and listed species and to preserve the unique coastal vegetation.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Cultural resources found within the ACEC are both fragile and irreplaceable examples of the prehistory of California. Furthermore, the area contains rare vegetation communities and habitat for listed animal and plant species. These resources are vulnerable to adverse impacts from urbanization, residential development, and unmanaged use.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Cultural resources within the area are likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the Morro shoulderband snail is a federally listed species and the area has been designated as critical habitat both of which elevate the area as a national priority. Furthermore, the area provides habitat for other federally listed species.

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.17 PIUTE CYPRESS

General Location: The proposed Piute Cypress ACEC is located in northeastern Kern County, about two miles south of the town of Bodfish, within the Kern River Valley. The area is adjacent to Sequoia National Forest Piute Cypress Botanical Area and within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area (established January 26, 1962, by Public Land Order 2594).

Public Surface Acreage: 2,305 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 239 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 2,217 acres (212 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 2,544 acres

Area Description:

The proposed ACEC, nominated principally for its significant occurrence of the rare, endemic, and BLM California sensitive *Hesperocyparis nevadensis* (Piute Cypress), expands the existing Piute Cypress ACEC in the Piute Mountains to include two parcels on Hobo Ridge on the northeast slope of Breckenridge Mountain. The area includes public lands and federal mineral estate in the Kern River Valley region of the Sierra Nevada Mountains with elevations ranging from 3,700 to 5,000 feet.

The existing Piute Cypress ACEC was designated as a BLM Natural Area under Public Land Order 3530 on January 29, 1965; then designated as an ACEC in the 1997 Caliente RMP. The area also falls within the Monache-Walker Pass NCLWMA, which is cooperatively managed with the California Department of Fish and Game under current public land laws. Approximately 440 acres fall within the Piute Cypress Wilderness Study Area (CA-010-046) that was recommended as unsuitable because of high potential for development of locatable mineral resources, the need for continued execution of fire management plans, adjacent community development, and continuance of the Monache-Walker Pass NCLWMA.

A variety of rare and endemic plants is found within the Bodfish Piute Cypress Grove; this 700-acre grove extends south of the proposed ACEC onto the Sequoia National Forest where it is managed as a Botanical Area. The rare Piute Cypress is only known from 13 small groves around Lake Isabella in Kern and Tulare counties in the southern Sierra Nevada. The Bodfish grove is the premier location of the known Piute cypress groves and the largest and oldest colony. Several other BLM sensitive plant species including *Delphinium purpusii*, *Navarretia setiloba*, *Streptanthus cordatus* var. *piutensis*, *Streptanthus cordatus* var. *piutensis* is known only from an extensive colony at the north end of the Piute Mountains occupying much the same area as the Bodfish Piute Cypress grove. All known populations of *Streptanthus cordatus* var. *piutensis* are either inside the Piute Cypress ACEC or within one mile of the ACEC boundary. *Navarretia setiloba*, is known from fewer than ten occurrences, including one at the base of the Piute Mountains. Other rare plants known from the area include two southern Sierra endemics on CNPS list 4: *Microseris sylvatica* and *Pentachaeta fragilis*.

Geology of the proposed ACEC is characterized by pre-Cretaceous metasedimentary rocks which have been intruded by Cretaceous mafic rocks. The mafic rocks consist of olivine gabbro, gabbro,

anorthositic gabbro, and dunite which is in part serpentinitized. At the contact of these units just south of the ACEC, is located the Tripoli tungsten mine. As this contact zone crosses the ACEC, there is moderate potential for tungsten and associated locatable minerals. The area also has moderate potential for geothermal resources.

Although the Piute cypress is dependent upon fire for regeneration, a devastating crown-fire could obliterate the grove entirely. In 1921, approximately 200 acres in the Bodfish grove were burned by a crown fire; yet over the past 80 plus years the trees have re-grown up to 20 feet tall. In 2010, approximately 150 acres of the USFS portion of the Bodfish grove and 36 acres of the groves on Hobo Ridge burned with lethal intensity. The Bodfish grove continues to be susceptible to devastating wildland fires due to its proximity to the town of Bodfish.

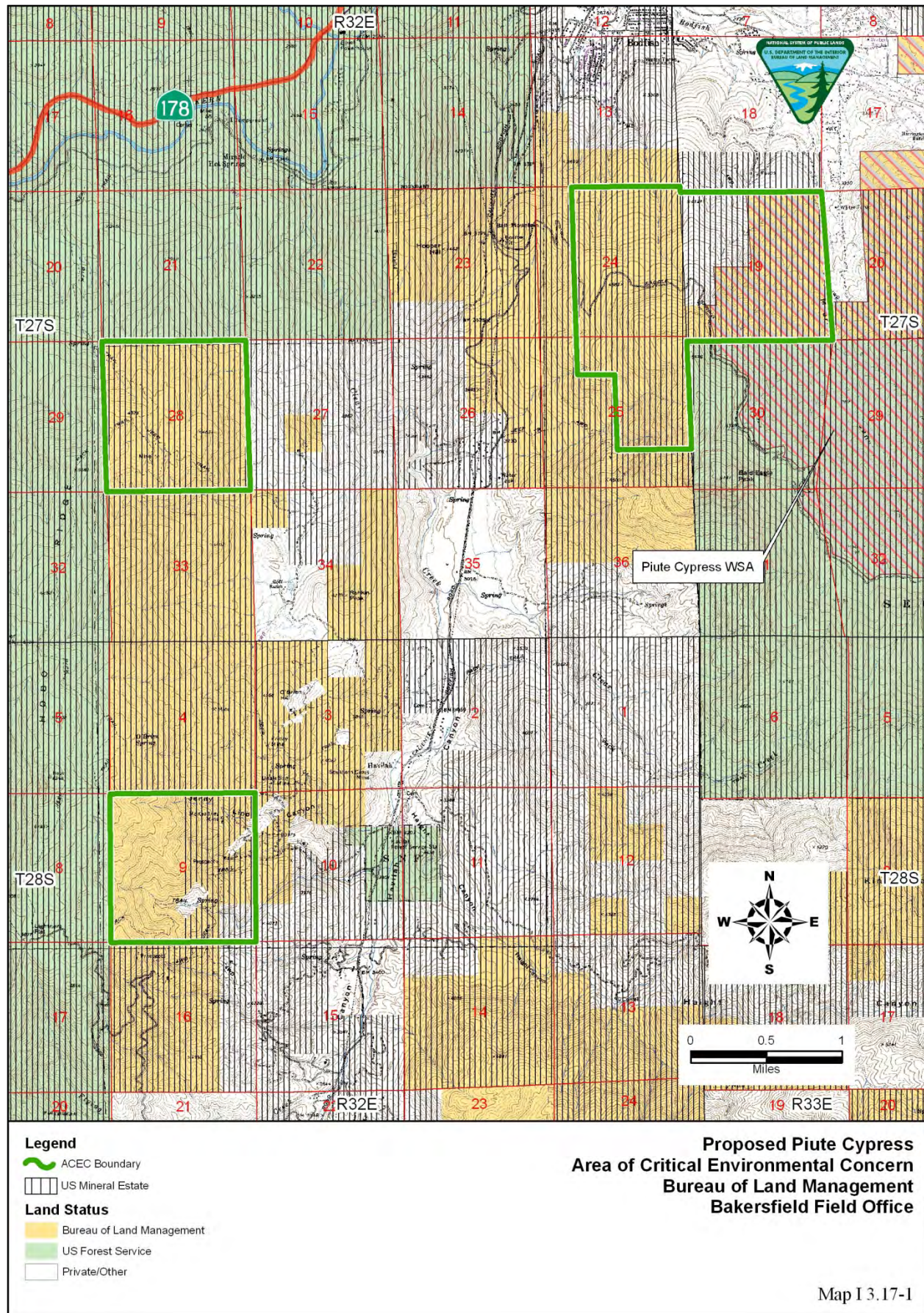
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Fish and wildlife resource may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The proposed ACEC contains habitat for and extant populations of Piute cypress, a plant species recognized by the CNPS as rare, threatened or endangered. Furthermore a number of other BLM sensitive plant species are known to occur within the cypress groves.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area is the type locality (location from which the species was first described) for the Piute cypress – a rare and endemic tree species known only from 13 small groves around Lake Isabella.

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The area is the premier location of the known Piute cypress groves and the largest and oldest colony comprising 50 percent of the total known range of the species. Several other BLM California sensitive plant species are found within or near the proposed ACEC.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	No national priority concerns are known in the area.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.18 RUSTY PEAK

General Location: The proposed Rusty Peak area is located in western San Luis Obispo County, approximately eight miles west of Atascadero, and six miles north of Morro Bay in the Santa Lucia Mountain Range.

Public Surface Acreage: 946 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 1,438 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 1,604 acres (658 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 2,383 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Rusty Peak ACEC includes public land and federal mineral estate identified principally for its rare vegetation types. Most of Rusty Peak is underlain by Jurassic basalt flows, however the southwest portion of the area consists of serpentinite, which gives rise to serpentine soils that support endemic vegetation communities and species. Elevations in the proposed ACEC range from 600 to 1500 feet.

Vegetative communities consist of serpentine chaparral, coast live oak woodland, and valley and foothill grassland (Holland 1986). Eight rare serpentine endemics that are also BLM California sensitive species are present in the surrounding Coast Range. *Dudleya abramsii* ssp. *bettinae* is known to occur within the ACEC and habitat is present for *Arctostaphylos pilosula*, *Carex obispoensis*, *Chorizanthe breweri*, *Fritillaria viridea*, *Monardella palmeri*, *Sidalcea bickmanii* subsp. *anomala*, and *Streptanthus albidus* subsp. *peramoenus*. Three CNPS list 4 plants are also possible: *Arctostaphylos obispoensis*, *Chorizanthe palmeri*, and *Ribes sericeum*.

Small amounts of chromite were recovered at the Middlemast Ranch Mine and the Jitney Mine, however there is low to moderate potential for the occurrence of additional chromite. In addition, there is a copper prospect known as the Prodigal Son Mine, but the potential for economic deposits of copper is extremely low. There are no oil and gas leases or mining claims and no land use authorizations within the proposed ACEC.

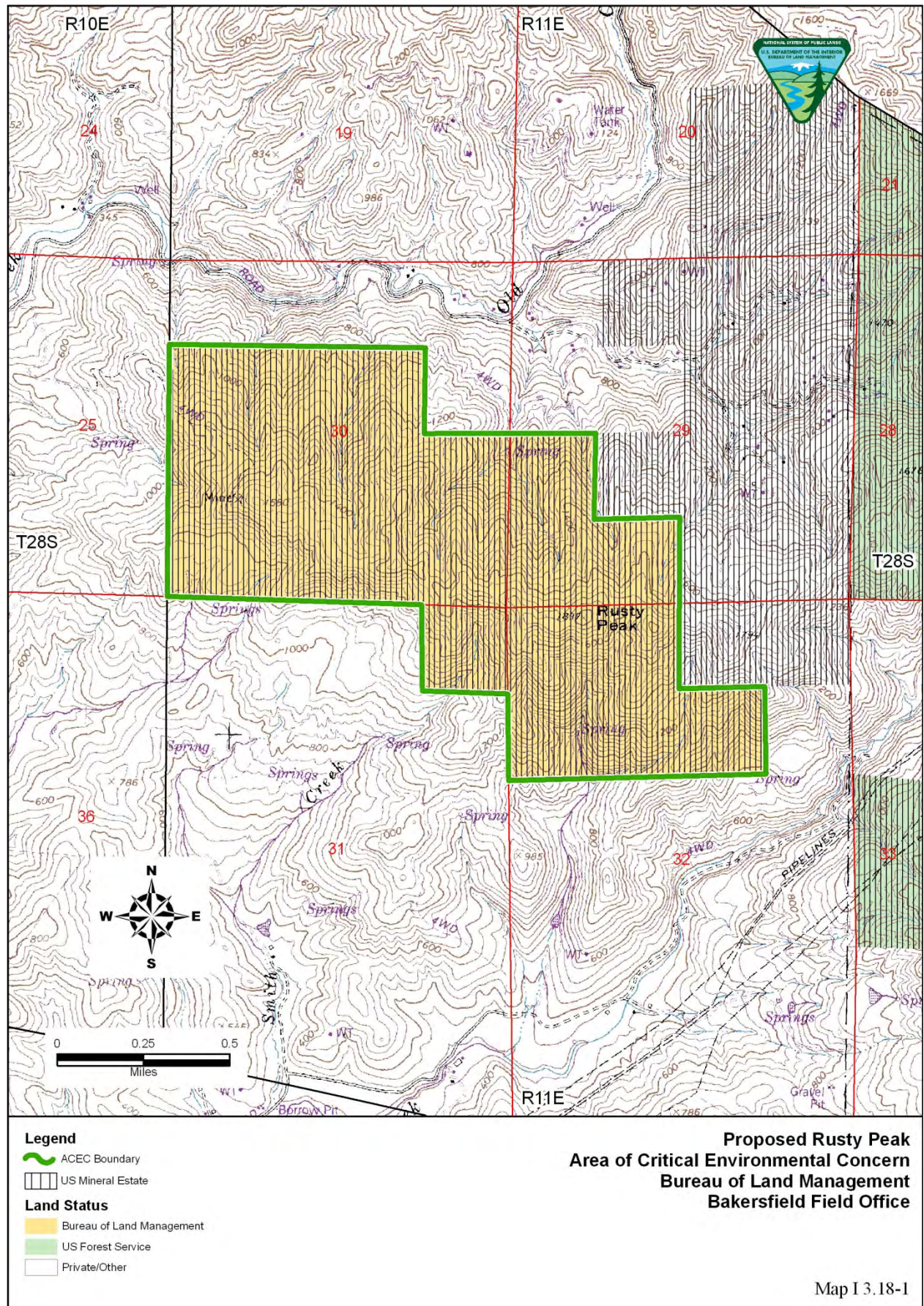
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Fish and wildlife resource may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be a factor contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The proposed AECE contains a number of rare plant species endemic to serpentine soils found in the area.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The rare vegetation series found within the ACEC is somewhat unique due to its dependency on serpentine soils and therefore limited in extent.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	No	The habitat here is typical of the coast range, but unique for the BLM because of the limited amount of such habitat under BLM management.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	No national priority concerns are known in the area.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.19 TEHACHAPI CORRIDOR

General Location: The proposed Tehachapi Corridor is located in Kern County north of the Tehachapi Mountains within the Southern Sierra Nevada. The area located, two miles north of the city of Tehachapi, includes the following Townships and Ranges; T28S to T31S – R32E to R35E. The area connects the Tehachapi area with the Sequoia National Forest south of the Kern River Valley; the proposal includes a portion of the Sequoia National Forest in the Breckenridge and Piute Mountains.

Public Surface Acreage: 31,144 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 244,164 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 170,090 acres (138,946 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 275,308 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Tehachapi Corridor ACEC includes private, state, and federal lands and mineral estate that was nominated through the public scoping process principally for its wildlife resources and rare plants. The nomination suggested the area contributes to a corridor linking the Coast, Transverse, and Sierra Nevada Ranges with the Mojave Desert. Located at the southern tip of the Sierra Nevada Range with elevations ranging from 1,500 to 8,400 feet, the proposed ACEC includes the Horse Canyon ACEC, and portions of the Piute Cypress ACEC and Monache-Walker Pass NCLWMA.

Ranging from the foothills of the San Joaquin Valley to the mountains in the southern Sierra Nevada range, the vegetation in the proposed ACEC includes grasslands, oak woodlands, riparian woodlands, and conifer woodlands, including some groves of the rare and unique Piute cypress. The federally-listed Bakersfield cactus also occurs within the proposed ACEC.

The lands within the proposed Tehachapi Corridor ACEC encompass great biodiversity and include habitat for many sensitive, rare, endemic and special status species.

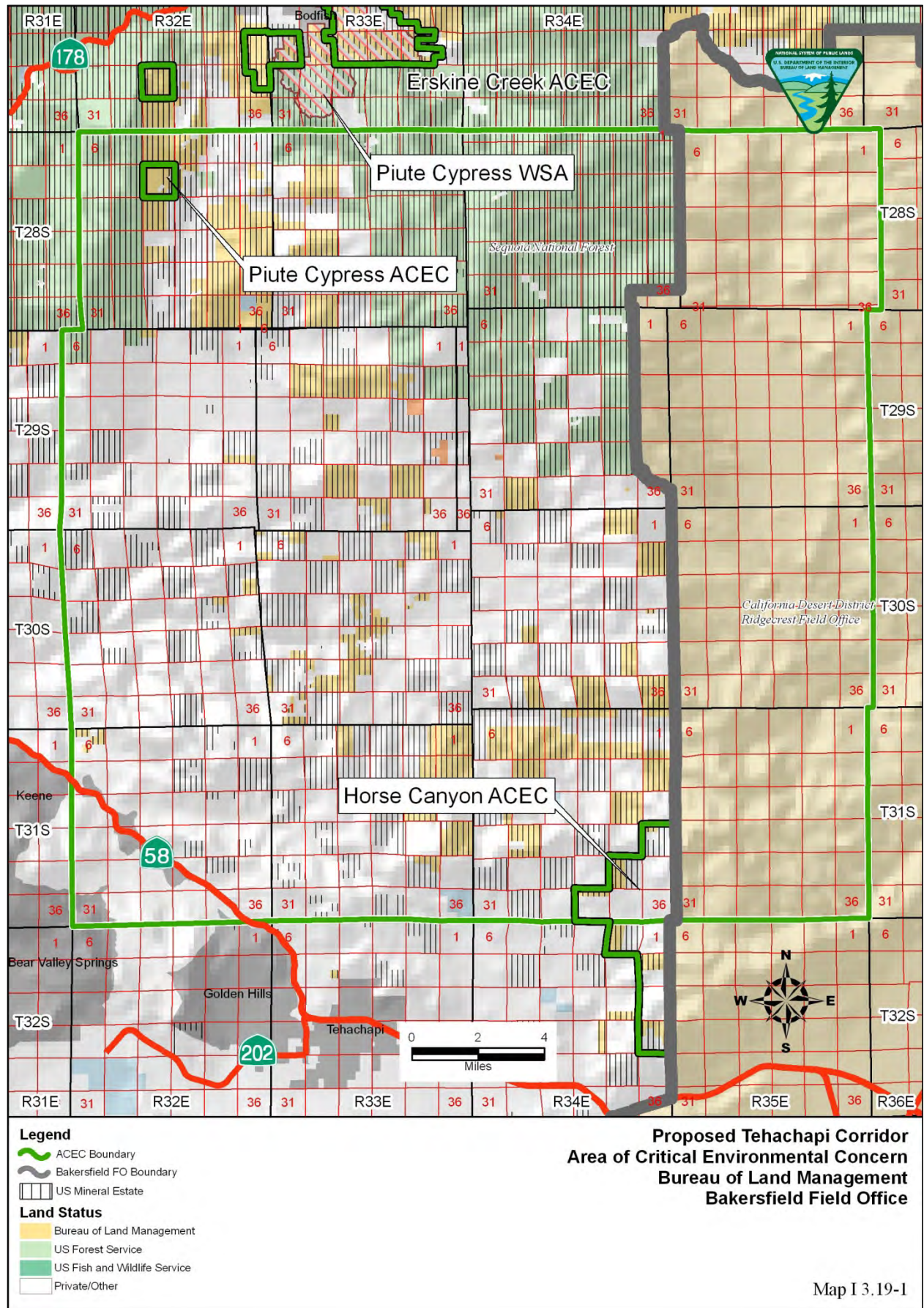
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area contains special status animal species, including federally and state listed and BLM California sensitive species, and habitat corridors that are essential for maintaining species diversity and genetic linkages.

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area contains special status plant species including federally and state listed and BLM California sensitive species.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	The area does not have more than locally significant qualities when compared to other similar resources within the Tehachapi corridor region.
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	No	The relevant resources on public lands within the proposed ACEC are not particularly rare or vulnerable to adverse change.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	No	Although a number of the federally listed species are present, their occurrence is uncommon and do not occur in sufficient numbers on public lands that would warrant protection for this national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



I.3.20 UPPER CUYAMA VALLEY

General Location: The proposed Upper Cuyama Valley ACEC is located 5 miles east and southeast from the town of Cuyama and 15 miles southwest of Maricopa, near the intersections of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Ventura, and Kern Counties and includes acreage in each. The area is adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest on the south and east; is south of the Carrizo Plain National Monument and west of the proposed Bitter Creek ACEC.

Public Surface Acreage: 6,351 acres

Other Land Owner Acreage: 8,859 acres

Federal Mineral Estate Acreage: 8,935 acres (2,584 acres Split Estate)

Total Proposed ACEC: 15,247 acres

Area Description:

The proposed Upper Cuyama Valley ACEC includes private and public lands and federal mineral, identified principally for its important habitat for federally listed animal and plant species. The area is also the convergence of the San Joaquin Valley ecoregion, the San Emigdio Range, and the Sierra Madre Mountains with elevations ranging from 2,400 to 3,320 feet.

The proposed ACEC and is located at the transition of the Cuyama River from the narrows in the foothills of the Sierra Madre Mountains to the broad, main plain of the Cuyama Valley. The proposed ACEC includes flat river bottom in the Cuyama channel, the surrounding gently sloping river terraces and steep mountain slopes and ridges. It is important in conserving the remnants of habitat in the Cuyama Valley that have not been converted to irrigated-cropland, vineyards and orchards.

Vegetation includes juniper woodlands, arid subshrub scrub, and alluvial scrub in the river channel. Vegetation series include California juniper series, Bigberry manzanita series, Bladderpod-California ephedra-narrowleaf goldenbush series, and scalebroom series (Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf 1995). The river channel migrates across the floodplain and is often devoid of vegetation or with disturbance adapted species like scalebroom. Water flow through the river is usually below the surface except during and immediately following rainfall events.

The juniper woodland terraces adjacent to the river floodplain are occupied by some of the largest extant populations of federally listed California jewelflower. While a few of these populations occur on public land, the largest and most extensive populations occur on private lands within the proposed ACEC boundary. Protection of the Cuyama Valley populations is necessary to achieve recovery goals for this species.

The proposed Upper Cuyama Valley ACEC contains important habitat for the conservation and recovery of the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, Kern primrose sphinx moth, and San Joaquin kit fox; there are several dry washes and alluvial fans leading to the river that provide habitat for these species. The recent discovery of Kern primrose sphinx moth in this area is also considered important for the conservation and recovery of this endangered species. In addition, the area along

the Cuyama River and in the lower reaches of Ballinger and Quatal Canyons is known as being a hybridization zone between the blunt-nosed leopard lizard found in the San Joaquin Valley and the long-nosed leopard lizard found in the Mojave, Sonoran, Chihuahuan, and Great Basin deserts. This hybridization zone is important biologically and considered to have unique opportunities for scientific study.

The Cuyama Valley has largely been converted to irrigated farmland (crops, vineyards, and orchards); as such, the remnants of habitat found in the proposed ACEC are increasingly susceptible to adverse change and encroachment from these land uses.

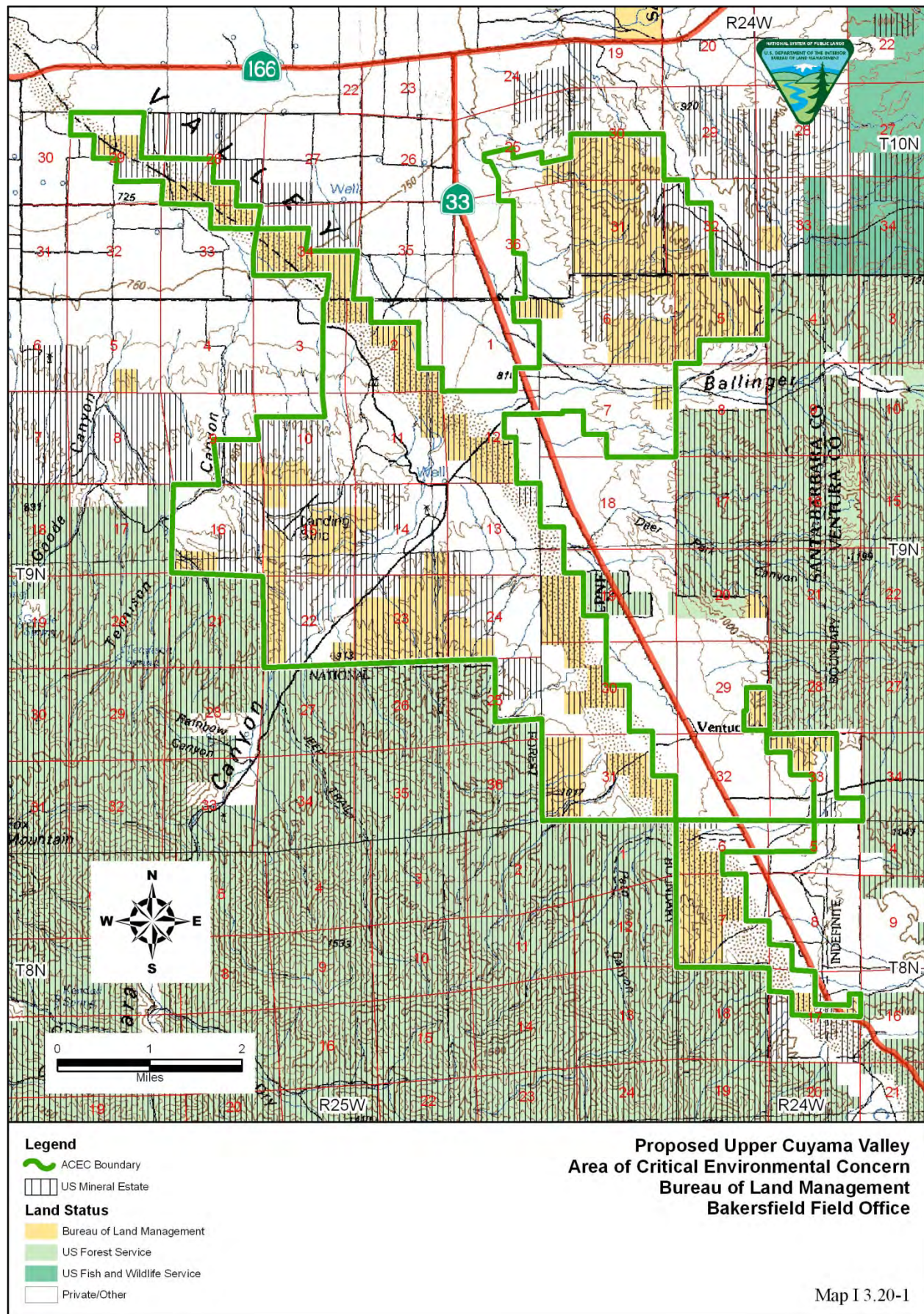
Relevance Criteria Determination:

Relevance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (e.g., rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	Cultural and scenic values may be present within the area, however they are not deemed to be significant values contributing to the nomination of the ACEC.
A fish and wildlife resource (e.g., habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The Upper Cuyama Valley area is a roost location between feeding stations for the federally-endangered California condor. In addition, it contains important habitat for the conservation and recovery of the federally listed blunt-nosed leopard lizard, Kern primrose sphinx moth, and San Joaquin kit fox.
A natural process or system (e.g., endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities; or rare geological features).	Yes	The proposed ACEC contains important habitat for the conservation and recovery of the federally listed California jewelflower.
Natural hazards (e.g., areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs).	No	There are no known natural hazards in the area that pose a threat greater than is found on all public lands.

Importance Criteria Determination:

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The proposed ACEC is occupied by some of the largest extant populations of California jewelflower. In addition, the recent discovery of Kern primrose sphinx moth in this area is also important for the conservation and recovery of this species.

Importance Value	Present	Rationale for Determination
Has a quality or circumstance that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The area along the Cuyama River is known as being a hybridization zone between the blunt-nosed leopard lizard and the long-nosed leopard lizard that is important biologically and considered to have unique opportunities for scientific study.
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	These areas contain habitat and extant populations of federally listed plant and animal species. Identification of these species as federally listed elevates the management of their habitats as a national priority.
Has a quality that warrants highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare (e.g., poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property).	No	The area contains no known qualities beyond those found on all public lands that warrant highlighting to satisfy either public or management concern over safety and public welfare.



LIST OF PREPARERS

The Interdisciplinary Team of BLM resource specialists in the Bakersfield FO who participated in the completion of the ACEC Report are listed in Table I-1.

Table I-1
BKFO Interdisciplinary Team Members

Name	Resource
Tamara Whitley	Archaeology, Paleontology
Sue Porter	Project Manager
Peter DeWitt	Visual Resources, Cave and Karst
Denis Kearns	Botany
Steve Larson	Assistant Field Manager
Larry Saslaw	Wildlife
Amy Kuritsubo	Wildlife
Larry Vredenburgh	Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

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